SERBIA

HER PEOPLE, HISTORY & ASPIRATIONS

W. M. PETROVITCH

Knoblauch

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SERBIA

HER PEOPLE HISTORY AND ASPIRATIONS

HERO TALES & LEGENDS : : OF THE SERBIANS : :

By WOISLAV M. PETROVITCH

Attaché to the Royal Serbian Legation to the Court of St. James

With a Preface by CHEDO MIYATOVICH, formerly Serbian Minister in London, and Thirty-two Illustrations in Colour by WILLIAM SEWELL and GILBERT JAMES. Size 6⅜ × 9½ in. 400 pages Letterpress. Bound in Cloth Extra, Gilt-top, with Design by WILLY POGÁNY. Price 10s 6d net.

This book contains much that will be new to English readers. The first chapter provides a brief historical *résumé*; Chapter II deals with the customs and characteristics of the Serbians, and is absorbingly interesting; following chapters reproduce the ancient ballads still sung by the bards to the peasantry, also attractive examples of the national folk-lore, etc. Mr. Petrovitch has been successful in retaining the quaint and rugged flavour of his originals, and he transports his English readers into a world of new ideas and emotions. The artists have aimed to catch the same spirit and their drawings appropriately illustrate the spirited text.

His Majesty King Peter I of Serbia

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BY

WOISLAV M. PETROVITCH

ATTACHÉ TO THE ROYAL SERBIAN LEGATION TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES AUTHOR OF "HERO TALES AND LEGENDS OF THE SERBIANS"

WITH FOUR PORTRAITS

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TO
MY DEAREST FRIEND IN ENGLAND
DR R. W. STARKIE

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PREFACE

JUST as the writer was concluding the historical retrospect which forms the bulk of this book,[1] a deputation of representatives of the Jugoslavs (*i.e.* the Serbs of Austria-Hungary, the Serbo-Croats and the Slovenes) arrived in London, and published a "Jugoslav Manifesto to the British Nation," which we reproduce here in its entirety, allowing this eloquent appeal to speak for itself.

"Austria-Hungary and Germany have imposed upon the Southern Slav nation a fratricidal civil war. Eight million Southern Slavs (Jugoslavs) are condemned to fight

[1] The chief reason, besides the shattering defeats inflicted by Serbia on the Austrian armies, why military operations south of the Danube ceased in December 1914, and why this retrospect need go no further than that date, has recently been revealed by the publication of the Italian Green Book. On February 12 and 17 the Italian Foreign Office informed Austria that any military action on the part of that Power in the Balkans would be opposed by Italy until the conclusion of an agreement for compensation in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty of Alliance.

against their own brothers and liberators. Large numbers have been expelled from their native soil, or put to death, while the prisons are crowded with political victims.

"To-day the Jugoslav people cannot give expression to its wishes; its representative assemblies are closed, many of its deputies are in prison or subjected to a rigorous surveillance.

"Those of our young men who succeeded in escaping are fighting in the ranks of the Serbian and Montenegrin Armies. We, who at the outbreak of war happened to be abroad, feel it to be our bounden duty to acquaint the civilized world, and above all the British nation, with the true sentiments and aspirations of our people. Our Jugoslav brothers in America, meeting last March at Chicago in a Congress of 563 delegates, have unanimously adopted our programme.

"The Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes pray for the victory of the Triple Entente and confidently await from it the salvation of the Jugoslav nation. The conviction that the Triple Entente is fighting for the triumph of the principle of nationality inspired the moral energy and superhuman efforts of Serbia

and Montenegro, and prevented their kinsmen across the frontier from utterly losing heart.

"For Serbia and Montenegro this war is one of self-defence and liberation, not of conquest; they are fighting to emancipate our people from a foreign yoke and to unite them as a single free nation. The military and political overthrow of Austria-Hungary will for ever put an end to that system of 'Divide et Impera" by which our people has for centuries been governed. The Jugoslavs form a single nation, alike by identity of language, by the unanswerable laws of geography and by national consciousness. Only if united will they possess the resources necessary for an independent existence.

"The Jugoslavs (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) inhabit the following countries: the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro; the Triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia (with Fiume and district); the provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Carniola; considerable portions of the provinces of Istria, Trieste, Gorizia-Gradisca, Carinthia, and Styria; and, finally, the Jugoslav zone of Hungary proper.

"To perpetuate the disunion of these territories by leaving so many under Austro-Hungarian rule, or to transfer even portions of them to another alien rule, would be a flagrant violation of our ethnographical, geographical, and economic unity, and to this our people would unquestionably oppose an energetic and justifiable resistance.

"The Southern Slav people aspires to unite its territories in a single independent State. The internal arrangements of the new State will be determined by the nation itself, in accordance with its own wishes and needs.

"The Southern Slav State (Jugoslavia) will be an element of order and of peace. While devoting its whole energies to the cause of progress it will also develop those well-known virtues of its seafaring population which the British nation will be the first to appreciate. Its ports will be open to trade in a manner hitherto unknown, and through them a commercial outlet will be assured to all the nations of their hinterland, especially to the Czechs and the Magyars.

"Our people, which professes several religions, and whose tolerant spirit is well

known, will crown its national unity by guarantees of religious equality and complete freedom of worship. Sure of the goodwill of our Russian brothers we appeal also to the sympathies of their Western Allies in our struggle for liberty. And in thus appealing, as representatives of a democratic people, to the British nation and Parliament, we look for such support as shall enable the Jugoslav nation, after centuries of martyrdom, to achieve at length its unity and independence.

"LONDON, *May* 12." [1]

The sons of the Serb, in spite of their wanderings and trials, in spite of the many influences to which they have been subjected,

[1] This manifesto was signed by the following members of the Jugoslav Committee :

President : Dr. Ante Trumbic, Advocate, President of the Croat National Party in the Diet of Dalmatia, late Mayor of Split (Spalato) and late member for Zadar (Zara), in the Austrian Parliament.

Members : Dr. Ante Biankini (of Starigrad, Dalmatia), President of the Jugoslav Committee in Chicago, U.S.A. ; Dr. Ivo de Giulli, Advocate, Town Councillor of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Dalmatia ; Dr. Julije Gazzari, Advocate, late Town Councillor of Sibenik (Sebenico), Dalmatia ; Rev. Don Niko Grskovic, President of the Croatian League in Cleveland, U.S.A. ; Dr. Hinko Hinkovic, Advocate, Member of the Croatian Parliament and

have maintained and upheld their ethnographic features, their national traditions and ideals, and above all their language. Throughout the centuries, in the Shumadia, in Macedonia, in the territories extending north of the Danube and from Montenegro to the very foot of the Alps, in defiance of the Osmanli Turks and Arpad's Magyars, the Serbs, to the wonder of all ethnologists, have clung together and never ceased to form one nationality. Gathered round their national hero Marko Kralyevitch, they have lived in the firm conviction that a day will dawn for

Croatian Delegate to the Parliament of Budapest; Dr. Josip Jedlovski, Advocate, Secretary of the Slovene Society 'Edinost' and of the Croat School Union in Trieste; Milan Marjanovic, of Kastav, Istria, Editor of *Narodno Jedinstvo* (National Unity), Zagreb (Agram), Croatia; Ivan Mestrovic, Sculptor, of Otavice, Dalmatia; Dr. Mice Micic, Advocate, Town Councillor of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Dalmatia; Dr. Franko Potocnjak, Advocate, late Member of the Croatian Parliament and Delegate to the Parliament of Budapest; Dr. Niko Stojanovic, Advocate, Member of the Bosnian Diet; Frano Supilo, Editor of *Novi List*, Fiume, late Member of the Croatian Parliament and Delegate to the Parliament of Budapest; Mihajlo Pupin, of Pancevo, South Hungary, Professor at Columbia University, New York; Dusan Vasiljevic, Advocate, Mostar, Herzegovina, Vice-President of the Serb National Union of Bosnia; Dr. Nikola Zupanic, Publicist, of Metlika, Carniola.

them when they will form a large State, fitted to resist the Germanic *Drang nach Osten*. After a long sleep—as long and as profound as that of Marko himself—they have now awakened, and have set themselves to their task of liberation and union. The national bards or *guslari* are even now improvising and singing new ballads that will charm our future generations and inspire them with 'winged ideas' even as our bards themselves have been inspired by the contemporaries of Marko and of Kossovo. The whole Serbian nation—taking this word in its broadest sense—believed that their national hero Marko was asleep in the vaults of his castle at Prilip, and that he would awaken on the Day to restore the mediæval Serbian Empire: and he awoke in very truth. At the battle of Prilip in 1912 the Serbians beheld him at the head of their battalions as a warrior *sans peur et sans reproche*. They now recognize him in their already famous national sculptor Ivan Meshtrovitch, a Dalmatian peasant, in no wise different from the peasant bards of Serbia proper and of Montenegro, who has come to delight the world by his plastic

representation of the great Serbian epic. The British public will before long enjoy an opportunity to appreciate the work of Meshtrovitch, which the Italians have compared favourably with that of Rodin, and to gain an insight into the Serbian soul, more vivid and inspired that the present writer's attempt of last year to bring before English readers the exuberance of Serbian national poetry.

The writer is confident that the fair-minded British people will welcome an honest and candid exposition of the history and mentality of the Serbian people, a race that in the past has been little understood in the West, partly for lack of information, partly through the superabundance of information emanating from Vienna, Budapest and Berlin. He also sincerely hopes that the English-speaking peoples will realize that Serbia is pre-destined, geographically and ethnically, to link together and amalgamate into one entity the northern and eastern lands inhabited by the Serbs and other Jugoslavs, and thus to oppose to the common foe an insurmountable barrier.

W. M. P.

May 1915

THE NATIONAL HYMN

TRANSLATED BY ELIZABETH CHRISTITCH

God of Justice! Thou Who saved us
When in deepest bondage cast,
Hear Thy Serbian children's voices,
Be our help as in the past.
With Thy mighty hand sustain us,
Still our rugged pathway trace;
God, our Hope! protect and cherish
Serbian crown and Serbian race!

Bind in closest links our kindred,
Teach the love that will not fail,
May the loathèd fiend of discord
Never in our ranks prevail.
Let the golden fruits of union
Our young tree of freedom grace;
God, our Master! guide and prosper
Serbian crown and Serbian race!

Lord! avert from us Thy vengeance,
Thunder of Thy dreaded ire:
Bless each Serbian town and hamlet,
Mountain, meadow, hearth, and spire.
When our host goes forth to battle,
Death or victory to embrace,—
God of armies! be our leader!
Strengthen then the Serbian race!

On our sepulchre of ages
Breaks the resurrection morn,
From the slough of direst slavery
Serbia anew is born.
Through five hundred years of durance
We have knelt before Thy face,
All our kin, O God! deliver!
Thus entreats the Serbian race.

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INTRODUCTION

The Country

THE Kingdom of Serbia lies immediately to the south of Austria-Hungary, from which it is at present separated by the Danube and the Save. It is bounded on the east by Rumania and Bulgaria, and to the south by Greece. But the greater part of its frontiers remain to be determined, for the Macedonian territory acquired in 1913 increased the kingdom's area to about 31,000 square miles, without giving to its four and a half million inhabitants that outlet to the sea which they have for the last fifty years constantly striven to acquire, and which is denied to none of its neighbours.

The greater part of the country forms a high plateau in which intermingle the four mountain systems of the Balkan Peninsula: the Dinaric Alps, the Carpathians, the Balkans and the Rhodopes. With their varied formation and structure, their precipitous heights, their deep gorges and rushing streams,

these uplands form one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and the Serbians may claim justification for their proverb : " One travels the world over, to return to Serbia." The mountainous nature of the country has had no little influence on the national spirit ; the love of freedom is a universal characteristic of hillmen, and throughout the centuries of bondage and oppression which the Serbs have endured in the past, they have withdrawn into their fastnesses at crucial moments, even as the sturdy Welsh folk and the stern Scottish Covenanters have done in Britain.

The rivers, which all partake of the nature of mountain torrents, and none of which are navigable, for the most part flow to the north ; among the tributaries of the Save are the Drina, which separates Serbia from Bosnia, the Jadar, the Dobrava, and the Kolubara ; into the Danube flow the Morava, the chief river of Serbia, the Mlava, the Pek and the Timok, which with the Danube divides Serbia from Rumania.

The Iron Gates

The Danube leaves the confines of Hungary through a narrow gap in the Carpathians,

below Orsova, known as the Iron Gates, in which the mighty stream becomes a roaring torrent, strewn with jagged rocks, until recent years an almost complete bar to navigation. Between 1890 and 1896 Austria, under powers given her by the Treaty of Berlin, blasted the bed of the river and constructed along the Serbian shore a series of waterways intended to render possible direct access to the sea by way of the Lower Danube. This has been so far achieved that ships of light draught can proceed down the rapids without much difficulty, and can return slowly with the help of powerful tugs ; but the toll dues, pilotage and towing charges are necessarily so high that the Danube is out of the question as a normal channel for Serbian imports and exports.

The new territories are watered by the Vardar, which flows south to Salonika, and the Drin, which at present forms the boundary between Serbia and Albania, and flows into the Adriatic.

The region of inaccessible mountain fastnesses which extends to the south of Belgrade, between the Morava and the Kolubara, and which gradually rises to the lofty summits

of the Rudnik, is called the Shumadia, or Forest Land; this is the very heart of Serbia, a district to which many references will be made in the following pages.

The climate, although subject to wide variations, is on the whole temperate and pleasant; neither the heat nor the winds are so trying as in most other Mediterranean countries. There is everywhere a luxuriance of vegetation, and the hot mineral springs will no doubt in the future attract an increasing number of visitors.

Chief Towns

Serbia boasts few large towns besides Belgrade, but the following, the population of which is increasing rapidly, will no doubt in the near future become centres of importance.

Belgrade (Beograd, 'the White City'), admirably situated on an amphitheatre of hills between the Danube and the Save, is the capital, and numbers 100,000 inhabitants. It is rapidly being transformed into an entirely modern town, with electric lighting and tramways, first-rate hotels, up-to-date shops, a well-equipped university with over

1000 students, and a number of museums and galleries.

Nish (25,000 inhabitants), which serves as a capital in times of stress and danger, is at the junction of the main lines from Belgrade to Constantinople and to Salonika. Situated amid magnificent surroundings, it is an important market and garrison town, though as yet hardly modernized. Serbians, a few Turks, 'Tziganies' or Gipsies, and Jews intermingle in peace and amity, though they have their respective quarters, some of which are more picturesque than sanitary. Well-equipped railway works put out both engines and carriages.

Kraguyevats (19,000 inhabitants), half-way between Belgrade and Nish, is the arsenal town; Chupriya, a few miles away, has recently become one of the most important brewing and sugar-refining centres in the East, and is rapidly growing into a modern town.

Posharevats (16,000 inhabitants), to the east of Belgrade, Leskovats (15,000), Shabats and Valyevo, near the western frontier, Negotin, near the Rumanian frontier, and famed for its wine, Pirot, the centre of the

Serbian carpet industry, on the line to Sofia, and Vrania, on the old southern frontier, are names which will all appear in the course of the subsequent narrative.

In the new territories the most important towns are Uskub and Monastir. The former (35,000 inhabitants), now officially designated by its Serbian name of Skoplye, situated on the Vardar, is a town of glorious history, which in the fourteenth century was the capital of Dushan's great Empire. The Serbians re-entered it in triumph on October 13, 1912. Monastir, now called Bitoly, and the second largest town in Serbia (60,000 inhabitants), is the ancient Heraklea, celebrated for its great fairs, and as the centre of Turkish fanaticism in Europe. It will attract tourists as the starting-place of excursions to the lakes of Ochrida and Prespa, through the latter of which the new frontier passes. These lakes, which are both twenty miles long, equal in beauty the most famous spots in Italy and Switzerland.

The Outlet to the Sea

The economic prosperity of many of the towns mentioned above will depend on the

development of the railway system. Serbia has as yet only 875 miles of railways open for traffic. The chief of these is the line Belgrade-Nish-Pirot, which goes on to Sofia. It forms a part of the great Express-Orient trunk line that connects Paris with Constantinople via Munich and Vienna. From Nish another important branch runs down the valley of the Vardar, via Skoplye, to Salonika, which by a convention with Greece has become the chief outlet for Serbian products.

This outlet is convenient for the export of cereals, which do not deteriorate rapidly, can stand a long sea voyage, and find advantageous freight in the ships which sail from west to east laden with manufactured products for Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, and on the return journey carry not only Russian, but also Rumanian, Bulgarian, and Serbian grain as ballast. But Serbia's chief exports are cattle, pigs, poultry, and fresh or dried fruit destined for Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, and other Western countries, and with regard to these essentially perishable goods, a glance at the map will show the great advantage of direct access to the Adriatic. Cattle take twenty-seven days to

cross from Salonika to Genoa, and reach their various destinations badly out of condition after the long sea journey, especially trying in the prevailing warm weather. By way of the Adriatic and the Italian railway system, the journey from Serbia to Naples would not exceed a week. The conclusion is obvious. The 'window on the Adriatic' is for Serbia not a matter of mere gratification of national vanity, but the fundamental economic condition of her future prosperity. Be it noted that the barring of the road to the Adriatic was one of the boons conferred on Serbia by the ill-starred treaty of Berlin. Until Bosnia-Herzegovina passed into the hands of Austria, Serbia had the free use of the excellent road from Mokra Gora, on her frontier, to Ragusa, which could be reached in four or five days. Since 1878 this outlet has been closed absolutely.

The Constitution

The constitution in force in Serbia to-day is that of 1903, and is in its main features identical with that of 1888, though it goes rather further in its guarantees of individual freedom. Thus it absolutely prohibits the

penalty of exile, and insists strongly on a number of 'liberties' and 'inviolabilities' which Britain has long enjoyed as a matter of course, but which are not yet taken for granted in Middle or Eastern Europe. It embodies representative and parliamentary government, based on a broad democratic foundation, the franchise being practically universal. In the Skupshtina, or National Assembly, the principle of proportional representation, with its due recognition of minorities, has received a wider application than in any other modern constitution; the members are elected by a *scrutin de liste* embracing a whole department; they vary in number from four to twelve in each department, according to the density of the population. It is characteristic of the conditions still existing in Serbia that in each departmental list there must be at least two candidates who fulfil the special condition of possessing a university degree or its equivalent. This ensures that the Assembly shall contain a certain percentage of members belonging to the *intelligentsia* or educated class, an essential precaution, since the peasants form nine-tenths of the population.

There is but a single Chamber, which exercises the legislative power in conjunction with the King. The executive power is in the hands of a Cabinet appointed and dismissed by the King, but responsible to the Skupshtina, which, having sole control of the budget, possesses the powers requisite to compel the Cabinet's resignation. The Assembly meets in ordinary session on October 10th of each year, and cannot be prorogued until it has passed the budget for the year following.

The judges are appointed for life, and are independent of the Government. So also are the members of the Council of State, which has important political and administrative duties, and which draws up the list of candidates from which the Skupshtina appoints the Cour des Comptes. To the latter the care of the budget is specially committed. The Council of State consists of sixteen members, elected half by the Skupshtina from a list presented by the King, and half by the King from a list presented by the Skupshtina. This is typical of many modes of procedure engendered by the mutual distrust and rivalry of King and Assembly which obtained under Serbia's past rulers.

The Constitution also embodies a Referendum in the form of a 'Great Skupshtina,' consisting of double the number of members of the ordinary Assembly, which may be convoked to decide on grave national questions, such as the election of a king or regent, the choice of an heir to the throne, modifications of the Constitution, or territorial exchanges.

Until 1913 the country was divided into seventeen *okrugs* or departments, subdivided, after the manner of France, into *srez* (arrondissements), communes and villages. The new territories have been divided into eleven departments, the total number now being twenty-eight. Each department is administered by a prefect, and each arrondissement by a sub-prefect. But these territorial divisions have also their local Assemblies, and every commune, urban or rural, is an autonomous entity, possessing the right to carry on its affairs as it pleases. For this purpose it elects a Municipal Council of from ten to twenty members, and the latter vests its executive power in a communal tribunal consisting of the president of the municipal council, two or more of his deputies, and a registrar.

Each village formerly consisted of a number of patriarchal communities called *zadrugas*. Within the *zadruga* all the members of one family lived in common, and each worked for the benefit of all. The young men, on marrying, continued to reside within the home, additions to which were built as required. The *zadruga* formed a corporate entity, which could take action before a court of law ; its possessions remained indivise, and a daughter, on marrying, received a dowry, but could claim no share of the common good. This was administered by an elected chief, usually the eldest member of the family, who bore the title of *domatshin*, 'lord,' or *stareshina*, 'elder.' The household affairs were managed by a matron, the *domatshitsa*, whose authority was absolute. During the second half of the nineteenth century the *zadrugas* began to break up under the individualistic tendencies of modern industrialism ; they are now fast disappearing, and will probably in the near future be things of the past.

The Serbian Church is autonomous, but maintains a close union, in the matter of dogma, with the Greek or Eastern Orthodox

Church. The internal control belongs to the Assembly of Bishops, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Belgrade, who is at the same time the Metropolitan of Serbia. The regular clergy belongs to the Order of St Basil, as is customary within the Orthodox Church.

Education has within recent years made rapid strides. Besides the University of Belgrade, already referred to, Serbia had in 1910 twenty secondary schools attended by nearly 8000 pupils, and 1300 elementary schools attended by 140,000 pupils. The political events of the last two years have afforded little opportunity as yet to make satisfactory educational provision for the newly acquired territory.

Present and Future Wealth

One of the first cares of the State, when the time for recuperation has come, must be the establishment of technical schools, in which the younger generation may learn not only to modernize its methods of breeding and cultivation, but also to utilize the untold resources which Serbia holds within her bosom. We have already stated that the

chief products and exports are at the present day cereals, comprising maize (the staple food of the country), wheat, barley, oats and rye; fruit, particularly plums, exported as prunes and preserves; swine and cattle. To these many other products will be added as soon as Serbia has found permanent markets, accessible without the payment of exorbitant dues in transit, accessible within a reasonably short space of time, and accessible under such conditions that the best part of the profits shall go to the producers, and not to Austrian middlemen. Thus favoured, Serbia will largely increase her output of tobacco, flax, hemp, sugar-beet; will engage on a large scale in the culture of silkworms, and will begin to exploit her six million acres of forest timber.

But the country holds other riches, indeed no soil in Europe hides greater accumulations of treasure. Gold, silver, iron, copper,[1] zinc and lead have been exploited since the most remote antiquity, but the ground has hitherto been no more than scratched on the surface;

[1] The copper mines of Maydan-Pek, to the south of Posharevats, are the richest in the world, and yield a metal of extraordinary purity.

coal and lignite have been revealed at every point where borings have been made; the numerous rivers abound in falls and cataracts which, once harnessed, will generate in unlimited quantities the great modern source of energy, electrical current. There is every probability that within the next generation Serbia will be one of the important industrial centres of Europe.

The Army

Small wonder that envious eyes have fastened upon this land of promise, and that unceasing efforts have been made to keep it in thraldom. No country has had to fight with more determination to achieve its freedom; no country, perhaps, will need to keep a keener edge on its sword in order to maintain it. Much has already been done to increase the efficiency of the army since 1908, when the imminence of a day of reckoning became obvious. Under a system of obligatory service, it consists to-day of an active army organized in three *bans*, and a *Poslednya odbrana*, or last line of defence.

Service in the army is for a term of twenty-four years. The recruit may commence his

service at any time between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one; he serves for eighteen months in the infantry, or for two years in the cavalry and artillery. He then belongs for eight and a half years to the reserve of the first ban. He is afterwards attached for six years to the second ban and for eight years to the third ban. The last line of defence consists of all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, and forty-five and fifty. In the Balkan War of 1912 the army numbered about 350,000 men; in 1914 its strength was between four and five hundred thousand. Belgrade and Kraguyevats are the training centres for the officers of the infantry and artillery respectively, and the standard of military education is high. The infantry weapon is the magazine 7 mm. Mauser rifle; the artillery is composed mainly of Schneider 1908 quick-firing field-guns from the Creusot works, but comprises also a number of Krupp manufacture. Of the powers of endurance, steadiness, *élan*, and general fighting qualities of the Serbian soldier, the events of the last three years have given more than sufficient proof. May I add that throughout her history Serbia has

looked westward for light and guiding, and that in the conduct of warfare also the Serbian soldiers and their leaders have striven to exercise those virtues of humanity and chivalry which distinguish the Western armies.

Two Appreciations

Of the characteristic qualities and failings of the Serbian people as a whole, it does not belong to one of themselves to speak with impartiality; the following pages will, it is hoped, help the reader to understand them, and perhaps to sympathize with their trials in the past, with their hopes for the future. A couple of quotations from competent observers may, however, not be out of place. Mr. A. Muzet, the well-known engineer, and one of the foremost authorities on the Balkan States, wrote in 1912, immediately before the Balkan War[1]: "The Serbian is immoderately proud; his self-confidence is great, and he loves his country, his land, his field, with all the legitimate pride of a people that have shed their blood during long centuries to attain their independence. 'Rather death

[1] A. Muzet, *Aux Pays Balkaniques*, Paris, 1912. Second edition, 1914.

than slavery,' such is his noble device. Before my arrival in Serbia, I had been told, 'Do not trust the peasantry, they are deceitful and untruthful.' This accusation is false. In the mining undertakings which I have directed, I have always been satisfied with them; I have found them, generally speaking, devoted, hard-working and honest. . . . If you know how to win their confidence, you will have no more trustworthy or more devoted auxiliaries. When they show distrust to a stranger, it is because the latter has attempted to impose upon them. I have observed this more than once."

The words that follow were spoken by an American Red Cross doctor in Serbia to Mr. Basil Clarke, the war correspondent[1]: "My word, Clarke, but I tell you these men are great. I feel that small beside them that I could hide myself. Pain! Suffering! You've not seen bravery till you've seen these men suffer. I'll take off a hand, an arm, a leg—without anæsthetics, mind you—and will the fellow budge? Not an eyelid. If you hear him say '*Kuku lele*' ('Oh, dear') that's as much as you'll hear, and not often

[1] *Daily Mail*, February 23rd, 1915.

that much. And die! They'll die without a sound—unless it is to thank you if they can before they go. Where this race of soldiers sprang from I don't pretend to know, but I tell you right now they're God's own men."

PART I : HISTORY

I : EARLY HISTORY

The Coming of the Serb

THE region known as the Balkans was colonized by Rome before the Christian era and formed the provinces of Illyricum and Moesia, the Serbia of to-day being known as Moesia Superior and Dardania. In this fertile and beautiful country flourishing townships sprang up on the banks of the Danube and the Morava; but during the following centuries, lying as it does close to the great highway through Europe *via* the valleys of the Danube, the Main and the Rhine, it was overrun in succession by Huns, East Goths, and Langobards, and was brought in 550 under the sway of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, only to be torn from his successors by the Avars, who again laid it waste.

It was at the beginning of the seventh century that the Serbs, who lived as a patriarchal people in the country now known as Galicia, descended to the shores of the Black Sea, thence moved westward along the

northern bank of the Danube, and crossing the river, settled mostly in those Balkan territories which they inhabit at the present time, namely, the kingdom of Serbia (which now includes Old Serbia), Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Batshka, the Banat, Croatia, Sirmia and Istria. Under what circumstances and under what leaders they effected their migration is unknown, but the ancient inhabitants of these regions, Latins, Illyrians, Thracians, Greeks and Albanians, seem to have been easily driven by the new-comers toward the Adriatic coast. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, after disposing of the Avars who had threatened him from the Danube, had directed his armies against the Persians, who had invaded Syria and possessed themselves of Jerusalem; when, after the series of campaigns in which he rolled back the tide of Persian invasion, he once more turned his attention to the northern boundaries of his empire, the new-comers had taken firm root in the Balkan region, which they were thenceforth to cling to in spite of the unrelenting efforts of the Eastern emperors to oust them. In this part of Europe

they were destined to occupy a preponderant position, due on the one hand to their warlike character, to their energy and to their fierce love of independence, and on the other to the commanding position of Serbia, which by its central situation and the strength of its mountain passes, has ever been the key to the whole of the Balkans.[1]

Early Civilization

The pagan and uncultured Serbian tribes now came into constant intercourse with the highly polished Byzantines, and became gradually converted to Christianity, according to the well-known law that when two peoples come into close contact the more civilized of the two, whether vanquished or victorious, must necessarily impose its civilization and customs on the more barbarous. The Christianization of the settlers became general in the first half of the ninth century, when the two brothers Cyrillus and Methodius—the so-called Slavonic apostles—translated and preached

[1] It is worthy of remark that at the very time of the Serbian migration, Mohammed was laying, on the shores of the Red Sea, the foundations of the formidable power to escape from the toils of which Serbia was engaged for centuries in a tragic struggle.

the Gospels in the ancient Slav language, then commonly understood by all the southern Slavs.

This was the time when gradual estrangement culminated in the 'great schism' between the Latin and Greek Churches, and the Church in Serbia was naturally constituted as a member of the Eastern or Greek branch, although it did not subject itself entirely to its rule.

Of the political constitution of the Serbs at this time we know very little. The nation was composed of a certain number of tribes composed of clans more or less related to each other; each tribe formed a geographical and political unit (Dzupa) at the head of which was a Dzupan, whose title and power seem to have corresponded to that of a Count among Western peoples. This tribal organization is common to all the Slavonic groups and was preserved for many centuries after their Christianization. The Dzupans met in an assembly called Skupshtina, and elected one of their number as Grand Dzupan, but as the Dzupas were originally quite independent of each other this title, during the early centuries of Serbian history, carried with it a very limited authority; in fact, for five cen-

turies after the settlement of Serbia, the history of the country is that of a struggle between the Grand Dzupans' attempts at centralization, and resistance of the Dzupas to these attempts.

First Struggles for Independence

This lack of cohesion made the Serbs an easy prey to the attacks of the Byzantines, the Bulgars, and the Franks, and under the first Grand Dzupans, whose name history has handed down to us, Voislav and Radoslav, they began slowly to realize that only by concentration of their power could they offer resistance as a nation, and a serious effort was made to found a State on the banks of the Morava, with Horea Margi (now called Chupriya) as its capital. This attempt, however, proved abortive, owing to the hostility of the Bulgars, a warlike people who had settled on the banks of the lower Danube, and whose history will constantly intermingle with that of Serbia.

A fresh attempt to form an independent State was made by the Dzupan Vlastimir (890); this province was called Rashka and extended around the rivers Piva, Tara and

Lim, touching the basin of the River Ibar in the east and that of the Vrbas in the west. To secure its freedom from molestation, the Serbs determined to acknowledge the supremacy of Constantinople, on the express condition that they should never be subject to a government proceeding from that capital, whose rule was notoriously extortionate and rapacious. The Emperor agreed that the Serbs should be ruled by their own Dzupans and should preserve their patriarchal form of government. But in the very beginning of its civil life the new State of Rashka was torn by dissensions amongst the leaders, which facilitated the interference of the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon. Tchaslav, the Dzupan of another tribe, though he possessed no rights to it, claimed the throne, and was supported by Simeon, who successfully invaded Rashka. The Bulgarians retained possession of the country for seven years (924–931), until Tchaslav succeeded in wresting from them a new State comprising, together with Rashka, the territories of Zetta, Trebinye, Neretva and Houm. The death of Tchaslav, however, was followed by a long period of disorder, and in the course of the following century the

Byzantine Empire, having again brought the now enfeebled Bulgaria within its rule, proceeded, despite the stipulations which it had entered into, to bring the Serbs under its immediate control, and to subject them to the imperial financial system. Rashka was overpowered, the Grand Dzupan fled, and a Greek Governor took his place. A general revolt followed; the Dzupan of Zetta, Stephan Voislav (1034–1051), who was imprisoned at Constantinople, effected his escape and, returning to his native land, quickly gathered the Serbs round him, declared himself independent of the Grand Dzupan of Rashka, appropriated Herzegovina, seized vessels from Byzantium laden with rich treasure, entered into alliance with the Italian subjects of the Greek Empire, who were also struggling for freedom, and finally drove the Greek governor and his dependents out of the country.

The First Kingdom of Serbia

In 1043, Constantine X, in order to re-establish his dominion over the rebels, sent a strong army from the coast into the interior. The Serbs encountered them in their mountains, as the Tyrolese and Swiss

peasants have so often met their enemies, and the entire Greek army was annihilated. The defeat was decisive for the time being; the Imperial Court was compelled to renounce all hopes of imposing a direct government, and the princely power of the Grand Dzupans was firmly established in the person of Voislav. The latter's son Michaylo (1053–1081) succeeded in bringing Rashka also under his authority, and in the year 1077 assumed the title of King, which was confirmed to him by Pope Gregory VII.

It should be noted that, settled as they are on the borders of the East and the West, the Serbians have always been in touch with Western Christendom and civilization, from which they have derived if not open aid at least a certain degree of support. The Grand Dzupans more than once allied themselves by marriage with the princely houses of Western Europe, and maintained relations with Venice and with the court of Rome.

Under the rule of King Bodin, the son of Michaylo, the Serbia of Tchaslav was reconstituted, and enlarged by the addition of Bosnia. But after Bodin's death new disorder ensued, caused mainly by the struggles between the

several pretenders to the throne. This internecine strife is an unfortunate feature of Serbian history; constantly we see energy wasted in futile dissensions among various members of ruling families, who criminally and fatally neglected national interests, in pursuit by legitimate or illegitimate means of their personal ambitions. Thus at all times has the Serbian nation been hindered from becoming a powerful political unit, in spite of the isolated efforts of many eminent rulers. Wars with Byzance and internal strife now spread ruin through the land, and led once again to disintegration, until in 1169 Stephan Nemanya established himself as ruler and founded a dynasty which was to endure until 1371.

II : THE RISE TO GREATNESS

Stephan Nemanya

With Nemanya begins a new page in the history of Serbia. For the time being the struggle for existence is at an end, Serbia's power and influence increase continually until at the end of the Middle Ages the empire of her Tsars ranks as one of the foremost in Europe.

The nation, as in all mediæval states, was composed of two distinct classes, the one privileged and the other unprivileged. The former, consisting of the nobility and the clergy, held all the political power in their hands. The unprivileged peasants, artisans, miners and tradesmen paid a tax into the king's treasury, and were bound by certain obligations to the proprietors of the lands on which they toiled; these were the king, the nobility, or the clergy. A comparison of the *régime* under which the unprivileged classes lived, with that of the contemporary countries of Europe, leads to the conclusion that the

condition of the land labourers of Serbia was, in times of peace, preferable to that of the same class in any of the other European States.

The Serbian kings, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were no rude clansmen; they were educated at the Imperial Court of Constantinople or at Venice, and gave great attention to the development of the country. German colonists were invited to come and exploit its natural resources and in particular the silver mines, which soon proved one of the chief sources of wealth. A brisk general trade was done with Ragusa and especially with Venice, whose monetary system Serbia had adopted. It follows that as early as the thirteenth century the chief political task of the Serbians was to secure a firm footing on the coast of the Adriatic. The usual title of the old Serbian monarchs was, "By the grace of God King of all Serbian lands and *to the sea-coast*."

Stephan Nemanya began his reign by organizing the kingdom and the army with a view to future expansion. He then tried his strength against the hosts of Emperor Manuel Comnenus; but twice beaten, he consented

to live on friendly terms with him, and to pay tribute. In return Manuel restored to Serbia the provinces of Rashka and of the upper Morava, together with the town of Pristina, to which Stephan immediately transferred the seat of government. On the death of Manuel in 1180, the Byzantine Empire being already in a state of dissolution, Stephan annexed Dalmatia and Herzegovina and conquered half of Bosnia. In 1185 he refused to pay tribute, thus asserting his independence, routed the troops of the tottering empire, annexed part of Macedonia, and placed Ban Kulin, an ally, upon the throne of Bosnia. Thus by bravery and wisdom he succeeded not only in uniting under his rule the provinces held by his predecessors, but also in adding those which never had been Serbian before. He also strengthened the Orthodox religion in his State by building numerous churches and monasteries. Feeling the weakness of advancing age, and wishing to give fresh proof to his people of his religious faith, the aged Nemanya abdicated in 1196 in favour of his able second son Stephan, and withdrew to the convent of Hilendar on Mount Athos, the prior of which was his third son Rastko,

who has remained famous in the Serbian Church under the name of Saint Sava, and continues to watch over his people. At the battle of Koumanovo, in 1912, did he not appear, robed in white, and seated in a white chariot drawn by white horses, to lead the Serbian peasants on to victory!

During the reign of Stephan II the so-called fourth Crusade was diverted by the shrewd policy of Venice against the failing Byzantine empire; Constantinople was taken by the western armies in 1204, and became the seat of a Latin empire which endured for sixty years. Sava seized the opportunity to wrest from the Greek patriarch the autonomy of the Serbian Church (1219), became himself the first Serbian archbishop, established eight bishoprics, and encouraged schools and learning. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest statesmen in Serbian history.

The First Conflict with Hungary

The reign of Stephan II was one of peace and prosperity, although disturbed by an ominous incident. Serbia and Hungary had hitherto lived in amity, with boundaries well defined by the rivers Danube and Save. But

no sooner had Serbia annexed, or assumed control over Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, than a rivalry of interests and ambitions immediately arose between the two paramount States. While Stephan's attention was given up to the fate of Constantinople and to friendly negotiations with Baldwin of Flanders, the King of Hungary intrigued with Stephan's brother Vukan, who was governor of Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro, encouraged him to rise against his brother, and sent a Hungarian army into Bosnia to support him. Sava intervened and induced Vukan to return to his allegiance, thus compelling the Hungarians to withdraw within their frontiers. With the death of Vukan, which occurred shortly afterwards, security was restored, but it is worthy of note that thus early arose, with regard to the Adriatic coast-line, one of the crucial problems which remain to be solved in the Balkans.

Stephan II was succeeded by his son Radoslav (1223–1233), who was dethroned by his brother Vladislav (1233–1242), who was removed from the throne by his third brother Urosh the Great (1242–1276). Urosh married

Helena, a French princess of the house of Courtenay, and a niece of Baldwin, the first Latin emperor of Constantinople; this lady contributed greatly to the spread of Western culture and knowledge among her adopted people. She founded schools, churches, public libraries, built new fortresses even, and earned a debt of gratitude which the historian Danilo has duly acknowledged. Urosh increased his territory and established the reputation of Serbia abroad, but in his turn he was dethroned by his son Dragutin (1276–1281). The latter, owing to the failure of a campaign against the Greeks, who had by now regained possession of Constantinople, retired from the throne in favour of a younger brother Milutin (1281–1321). Soon afterwards Dragutin received from his mother-in-law, the Queen of Hungary, the lands between the rivers Danube, Save, and Drina, and assumed the title of King of Sirmia. Dragutin yielded, while still alive, his throne and part of his lands to Milutin, another part remaining under the suzerainty of Hungary. Milutin, who inflicted severe defeats on the emperor Michael Palæologus, and extended his territories as far as Skoplye (later the Turkish Uskub) and

the Ægean, was certainly one of the most remarkable descendants of Nemanya. His son Stephan Detshanski (1321–1331) defeated the Bulgarians in the famous battle of Velbouzd, and brought the whole of Bulgaria under his sway.

Dushan the Great

In 1331 the Voyvodes, or nobles, dethroned Stephan in favour of his son Dushan the Powerful, the most notable of all Serbian sovereigns.

Dushan conquered Albania, Epirus, Thessaly, the whole of Macedonia with the exception of Salonika, and in fact brought under his sway the bulk of the Byzantine Empire. Having established his rule over the whole of the Balkans, he proclaimed himself, in agreement with the Vlastela, or assembly of nobles, Tsar of the Greeks and Serbians (1346), elevated the Serbian archbishopric to the dignity of a patriarchate, and was solemnly crowned at Skoplye on Easter Day. An outstanding event of his reign was the promulgation in 1354 of the *Zakonic*, or code of customs, ordinances, and laws of the Serbian Empire

in which Dushan sought to secure the life, freedom, and property of all his subjects, and to favour the development of learning and trade ; this document constitutes one of the principal sources of information on the state of civilization in the Balkans at the close of the Middle Ages, and proves that Serbia was little, if anything, behind the foremost States of Europe. Ranke, Mickiyevitch, and others, have stated that in Dushan's *Zakonic* is reflected more of the Slavonic genius than in any other code of the Slavs.

The Coming of the Turk

We have reached the culminating point in the history of Serbia ; her rise in power and prosperity, in spite of constant strife on the part of her rulers and would-be rulers, dates from the breaking of the power of the Byzantine emperors at the dawn of the thirteenth century ; by the middle of the fourteenth a new foe had appeared in the south-east, a power more hostile, more dangerous than Byzance, a blighting influence which was to plunge the whole of the Balkans into political impotence and renewed barbarity for nearly four centuries.

The Seljuk or Ottoman Turks, driven by the Mongols from Central Asia into Armenia, had gradually moved westward through Asia Minor, established their capital at Brusa, and taken Nicæa. Brave, disciplined, and well organized as a cavalry force, and possessing in their janissaries a permanent body of infantry equal to any in the world, they constituted for Byzance and for the Balkans a danger against which in the helpless state of the Empire, the only protection was the intervening sea. The emperors seemed not to realize their impending fate; already the Sultan Orkhan had obtained in marriage a daughter of Cantacuzene, and the latter was engaged with Palæologus in unseemly strife for the throne, when in 1355 Orkhan's son Solyman crossed the Dardanelles and established himself in Gallipoli, thus obtaining for the first time a strong foothold in Europe.

Dushan at this moment had already made up his mind that the only way to secure the Balkans from invasion was to install himself in Constantinople, and by uniting the Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek nations into one state, to regenerate and re-establish the

falling Empire. With a great army of 80,000 Serbs he marched southward, and easily possessed himself of Thrace and Adrianople. Already the van of his army was almost within sight of Constantinople, when on December 18th, 1355, he was taken suddenly ill in the village of Diavoli, and died the same night, at the age of forty-eight. Poison was so common a weapon in the hands of the last Byzantine emperors, that John Palæologus may well have been responsible for Dushan's mysterious end. So, at any rate, passed away the only man who might have stayed the Ottoman onslaught, and with his disappearance all hopes of organized resistance were at an end. Although Serbia was not to succumb entirely to the Turk until a hundred years later, the process of disintegration began almost on the morrow of Dushan's death.

III : THE YEARS OF BONDAGE

DUSHAN'S son Urosh was only nineteen when he fell heir to an Empire divided, according to feudal custom, into fourteen large fiefs, which Dushan had not had time to consolidate, and which were foredoomed to fall a prey to the incessant and insatiable greed of the powerful nobles. Between 1359 and 1362 Thessaly, the Banat, and Herzegovina were torn from the Empire. The defeat of John Palæologus with a Græco-Serbian army under the walls of Adrianople, in 1362, induced Bulgaria and Albania to resume their independence ; in 1367 the Voyvode Vukashin, governor of Dalmatia, who had been Regent during the minority of Urosh, marched upon Pristina and possessed himself of the throne, while Urosh fled into Bosnia, where he died in 1371.

Meanwhile the Ottoman inroads were at last causing general alarm in the Balkans ; in 1371 Vukashin led a fresh host to stem the invasion, but on the banks of the Maritza

he lost both the battle and his life, and all Serbian lands south of Skoplye were occupied by the Turks. This episode marks the first great conflict between the Turks and the Serbians.

Prince Marko

Marko, the eldest son of Vukashin, now proclaimed himself King of the Serbians, but the Vlastela and the clergy refused to recognize his claims, and elected to the throne Knez (Prince) Lazar, a relative by marriage of Dushan the Powerful, and therefore of the great house of the Nemanyitch. More than passing mention must be made of Prince Marko Kralyevitch: on the usurpation of the throne by Vukashin he had championed the cause of Urosh, been banished from Serbia, and gathered about him a band of free lances; with this body of followers he spent his life in the pursuit of extraordinary adventures until his death in 1394 at the age —so tradition has it—of a hundred and three years. His valorous deeds, magnified and transformed by oral transmission among the people, have earned him the name of the *Cid* of Serbia, and he lives in tradition as the

national hero of the Serbs. According to many, indeed, he is not dead, but sleeps in a vault under the black mountains that overhang Prilip, his native place. His sword is planted in the rocky walls of the vault, and his horse Sharatz nibbles patiently at the overgrowing moss. Thus, little by little, the stone is worn away and the sword-blade laid bare. A day shall come when the sword will fall to the ground; then Marko will awake, and sword in hand, will reappear, mounted on Sharatz, to gather the Serbs round his banner and lead them against the Turks, to exterminate them for ever. Nay! the prophecy has been fulfilled, for the Serbian infantry plainly beheld him, on November 5th, 1912, as they stormed the forbidding heights under which he had slumbered.

Kossovo

Tsar Lazar spent his reign in fighting brilliantly first against the Hungarians, who attacked him wantonly and were heavily defeated in 1374, and then against the Turks, whose system of occupying conquered countries with military colonies and carry-

ing off the original inhabitants, was now arousing fierce opposition. At the famous battle of Plotchnik a body of Ottoman troops was annihilated among the mountains of Montenegro. Exasperated at the renewed activity of the Serbians, Sultan Amurath in 1389 marched against them with a huge army, to meet which Lazar obtained the support of large bodies of Albanians and Hungarians. The two hosts met on June 15th, on one of the largest plains in the western half of the peninsula, the field of Kossovo, or 'field of blackbirds,' near Pristina, and until noon the fortune of arms was with the Serbs. The particulars of the battle are obscured by national bias and the vagueness of tradition, but there appears no reason to doubt that the ultimate defeat of the Serbians was primarily due to treachery in their own camp.

Vuk (Wolf) Brankovitch, one of the great nobles, to whom was entrusted one wing of the Serbian army, had long been jealous of his sovereign and of his brother-in-law Milosh Obilitch. Some historians state that he had arranged with Sultan Amurath to betray his master, in return for the promise of the

imperial crown of Serbia, subject to the Sultan's overlordship. At a critical moment in the battle, the traitor turned his horse and fled from the field, followed by 12,000 of his cuirassiers, who believed this to be a stratagem intended to deceive the Turks. When later in the day the Turks were reinforced by fresh troops under the command of the Sultan's son Bajazet, the Turkish victory was complete. Lazar was taken prisoner and beheaded; the Sultan himself perished on the field by the hand of the Serbian voyvode Milosh Obilitch.[1]

The Passing of Serbia

From that day Serbia ceased virtually to be an independent kingdom. For another fifty years she nominally retained her rulers, while her centre of gravity shifted northward, the capital being moved first to Krushevats, and later to Smederevo (Semendria), but the true instinct of the people led them to mourn over the 'fatal field of Kossovo,'

[1] The rulers of the Nemanyitch dynasty have left their mark on Serbia in the form of magnificent churches and shrines, some of which (*e.g.* at Detchani, Gretchanica, Milendar) are of great architectural beauty.

as that on which their independence received its death blow. During part of the fifteenth century Serbia struggled to retain some shadow of freedom, while her rulers, and in particular Dyoorady Brankovitch (1427–1456), appealed for help to Austria, Hungary, and Venice. The Ottoman power, although held in check for some time by John Hunyadi, continued slowly but surely to penetrate and crush the whole of the Balkans. Constantinople, besieged for the third time, fell in 1453 after a heroic defence ; six years later, in 1459, Mahomet II formally annexed Serbia, which until the nineteenth century was reduced to a mere Turkish pashalik. Two hundred thousand of the inhabitants are said to have been led away into slavery, and a number of the most influential families were rooted out. Politically, Serbia ceased to exist for three hundred years.

As for the people, they split into three distinct groups. Those who dwelt in the plains and lowlands of the valley of the Danube remained in their homes, and bent under the Turkish yoke ; considerable numbers, and especially the inhabitants of 'Old Serbia,' settled, in the course of the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Hungary, where large bodies of Serbians had already taken root—as late as 1694, 36,000 families crossed the Danube and colonized the Banat, and the so-called Military Frontier, *i.e.* Sirmia, Slavonia, and Southern Croatia. Lastly, a third group, unwilling to yield to any authority, withdrew into the least accessible recesses of the mountains, and became practically outlaws; entrenched in their mountain passes, expert in guerilla warfare, soon inured to persecution and hardship, these indomitable fighters are known to history as the Haiduks and Uskoks, who preserved and upheld the traditions of heroism of their ancestors and the spirit of their race. So tenaciously did they maintain their nationality, religion, and speech that at the dawn of the nineteenth century they still formed a nucleus round which Serbia was once more to grow into a political body.

The subjugation of Serbia was speedily followed by that of Bosnia (1463) and of Herzegovina (1482). An Albanian chief of Serbian origin, George Kastriotovitch Skander-Beg (1443–1468), defended for a time with great heroism the liberty of Albania. Even-

tually, however, the Turks possessed themselves of the whole peninsula with the exception of Montenegro, which they never could subdue, owing partly to the heroism of its population, and partly to the mountainous nature of the country. Many noble Serbian families found a safe refuge in that land of the free ; many more went to Ragusa as well as to the Christian princes of Valachia and Moldavia.

The multitude of young men who left Serbia to seek homes in Hungary and Dalmatia fought as volunteers in the service of Venice, and especially of Austria, in all the wars against the Turks ; they were the so-called Uskoks whose history has been recorded by the Venetian Paolo Sarpi, and whose loyal services during these three hundred years Austria requited so ill that she was never able to gain their trust and sympathy.

The Serbian population which had accepted the Ottoman rule lived thenceforth in a most unhappy condition. They soon ceased to be proprietors of their own land, which was divided among Turkish Spahis. To these land-lords those of the people who did not

embrace Islam had to render many personal services, and to give a tithe, or a seventh part, or even a third part of all their produce. They paid a tax to the Sultan, a tax to the governing Pasha, and 'baksheesh' to the tax-collector, whom they were also obliged to entertain. During the Turkish invasions of Hungary the passage of countless armies again and again reduced a naturally fertile country to an utter waste. There was no security for life, honour, or property, and there was the crowning horror of the gift of the children, every seventh or every fifth year, to be trained as Janissaries.[1]

Thus passed the eighteenth century, with promise of better things ever alternating with bitter disappointment. By the Peace of Posharevats in 1718, Serbia, with the Banat and the greater part of Bosnia, had come under Austrian rule, but the overbearing attitude of the Magyar officers and officials

[1] The body of Janissaries was created in 1328 out of the prisoners of war of the Turks, and thereafter recruited by seizing Christian boys, who were trained as adherents of Islam, and organized as a privileged body of infantry. In 1796 their number had risen to 150,000, and their power had become an actual danger to the sultans. Their order was suppressed in 1826.

effectively quenched any sympathy that the Serbs might have acquired for their northern neighbours, and in the war of 1738–9 the Serbians actually fought for the restoration of Turkish rule. Their only reward was a period of still more acute suffering from the cruelty of insubordinate Janissaries, and in the war of 1788–91 the Serbians once more fought on the side of Austria. Joseph II had joined forces with Catherine of Russia to drive the Turks definitely out of the Balkans; acclaimed by the Serbs, who volunteered in thousands for this war, an army of 200,000 men marched up the Danube, and gained possession of Belgrade, Shabats, and the whole of Bosnia. Reinforced and guided by Haiduks, they penetrated into Serbia, carried the town of Krushevats, and drove the Turks into Macedonia. At this moment Joseph died; his successor, Leopold II, perturbed by the events of the French Revolution, concluded with the Turks the peace of Sistova, and surrendered everything that had been won, including Belgrade, leaving the disheartened Serbians to fend for themselves.

IV : THE YEAR 1804

The Janissaries

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the people seemed almost resigned to their fate; they had lost touch with Western Europe, knew comparatively little of Russia, and were experiencing some alleviation of their misery from the kind and just rule of the Governor of Belgrade, Hadgi Mustapha Pasha, who kept the Spahis in order, punished any acts of violence toward the poor or helpless, and lives in Serbian tradition with the expressive title of 'Mother of the Serbs.' To this happy *régime* there was a sudden and unexpected end.

It had been arranged in the last treaty of peace between Austria and Turkey, that the Janissaries should not occupy the Serbian fortresses on the Austrian frontier; and Bekir Pasha had actually fulfilled this stipulation, compelling the Janissaries to retire into Bosnia and Bulgaria. These troops, however, accustomed to live dissolutely at

the expense of the population, insubordinate, and, through their huge numbers, already recognized as a national danger, presently rose against the Sultan, who, to pacify them, permitted their return to the Pashalik of Belgrade, in contempt of his treaty obligations, but in accordance with the time-honoured Ottoman maxim that promises made to Giaours are not binding upon the True Believers.

The Janissaries hurried back into Serbia, promptly murdered Mustapha Pasha, organized a centralized military government of terror, and initiated a rule of such unexampled tyranny and plunder, that large numbers of the people fled to the mountains to join the Haiduks, while the 'Spahis,' or Turkish land-lords, joined the remainder of the population in their complaints to the Sultan. A threatening firman from the Porte precipitated a climax. Early in 1804 the Janissaries commissioned murderers throughout Serbia to kill all the nobles, mayors, chiefs of cantons, priests and monks—in short, every man who possessed any influence over the people. But news of the massacre travelled fast, and every man of any standing

in Lower Serbia hastened to take refuge amid the mountains and forests of the Shumadia.

Within these impregnable fastnesses there was safety, but for any who fled to them there could be no peaceful return to the fertile valleys below. It lay with those who had now fled from their homes to decide their own fate and also the fate of Serbia; they must either become 'outlaws,' and submit to the extinction of their nation, or begin anew against their oppressors the struggle which in the past had so often ended in disaster. The outlook was black enough: war funds, artillery and equipment, supporters among the neighbouring States, leaders, all these essentials were equally lacking; they were an unorganized crowd, with their stout hearts as their only asset; yet they saw no course open to them but to fight, and to die, if die they must, bravely and as free men.

Karageorge

There lived at this time in the village of Topola, on the borders of the Shumadia, a man named George Petrovitch. He had some experience of warfare, having served

under Austria as a volunteer in 1788, and was known as one of the most enterprising men in the country; he was also one of the wealthiest, being a large breeder of swine, which have ever been one of Serbia's chief sources of revenue. He had narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Janissaries by instant flight into the forests. Tall, stalwart, and determined, highly intelligent though illiterate, he was also violent, morose, and taciturn, and known to the Turks on this account as Kara George (Black George); it is under this name that he has passed down to posterity. No sooner had he reached a place of safety than many bands of fugitives gathered round him, while others grouped themselves in the Morava and Kolubara districts about the chiefs Nenadovitch, Katitch, and Vasso Tcharapitch. They were presently reinforced by resolute bands of Haiduks, and to make a beginning, attacked the village of Sibnitza, near Belgrade. Having killed and plundered the Turks, they carried off with them all the Serbians capable of bearing arms, and dispatched couriers in all directions; every man who could carry a gun was ordered to

join an armed band; the women and children were to take refuge in the mountain strongholds. The movement quickly spread to the further banks of the Kolubara and Morava rivers; before the Turks could realize what was happening, they had been cleared out of the villages and smaller towns, and driven into the fortresses.

Thus commenced the insurrection of the Serbians; in a few days the whole country was in the hands of the very men whom the Turks had doomed to extinction. The insurgents now set about choosing a leader for the struggle that was yet to come. The Kneses or nobles among them were unwilling to assume the responsibility of the chief command, and they proposed Karageorge. The latter excused himself at first, on the grounds that "he did not understand how to govern, that his impetuosity rendered him unfit for office, that he could not wait to consult, but would be inclined to kill at once." His objections were waived aside, and Karageorge became Commander of the Serbians, although with an authority as yet undefined.

The First Campaign

Meanwhile the Janissaries, under their leaders or Dahis, had made themselves secure in Belgrade and the other fortresses, and a body of Bosnian Janissaries advanced from Shabats to their assistance. Reinforced by Belgrade troops, they passed through Losnitsa, and met the Serbians on a line of half completed entrenchments which the Serbians allowed the Janissaries to occupy. Here they were promptly surrounded and subjected to a destructive fire, and realized that they had walked into a trap. The Bosnians hastened to explain that they had not come to fight, but merely "to ascertain the state of affairs." Permission was granted them to effect a withdrawal, but as the Belgrade contingent endeavoured to retreat under the cover of their allies, both parties were almost annihilated.

Encouraged by this success, the Serbians marched against the fortresses. The army of the Shumadia besieged Belgrade; in the east an attack was made on Posharevats, while to the west Jacob Nenadovitch encamped before Shabats. Here Serbian his-

tory has its 'Thermopylæ.' Two hundred Haiduks had occupied the monastery of Tshoketshina to guard the road from Bosnia. They were attacked by a fresh body of Bosnian Turks one thousand strong, who were hastening to the relief of the town. Entrenched upon a height near the convent, they barred the road for a whole day. In the evening, when the Haiduks' ammunition was spent, the Turks, strongly reinforced, attacked them anew, and killed every one of them, but at such a heavy cost that their shattered troops had to retire. Thus Nenadovitch was enabled to take Shabats, where enormous stores of war material fell into his hands; he then hastened to the assistance of the besiegers of Posharevats.

In the meantime his brother, Matteia Nenadovitch, the chief priest of Valyevo, had been sent to Austria to buy arms and powder from the Hungarian Serbs, and to petition Archduke Charles of Austria for help against the common enemy. Laying stress on the fact that the Turks had sought especially to kill all Serbians who had lately served in the Austrian armies, he begged for war material and officers, and naïvely asked

that "as many Austrian soldiers be sent to aid his country as Serbians had aided Austria in the war against the Turks." The Archduke answered that unfortunately Austria was now at peace with Turkey, and could give the Serbians no support. The Serbian archbishop of Hungary did better: he sent Nenadovitch an iron cannon, which the priest brought back in triumph together with a German gunner, obtained at a price. Thus was constituted Serbia's first artillery force; it did great execution at Shabats, and brought about the early surrender of the town; no sooner did the gun appear before Posharevats than there also the garrison capitulated.

The Serbian troops now concentrated before Belgrade, where to their surprise and embarrassment they were joined by a body of Turkish regulars from Bosnia under the command of Bekir Pasha.

It must be borne in mind that the Janissaries had proved for some time past a source of serious embarrassment to the Porte in various parts of the Ottoman States; the Sultan had not dared hitherto to call on his Christian subjects to assist in reducing them to obedience

—the Moslem may not invoke the aid of the Giaour against the Moslem—but the Serbians, having taken matters in their own hands, were in reality fighting for the Sultan. Only it was not good that a victory over any section of the Faithful should lie to the credit of the Giaours, so at this stage the management of the whole affair was entrusted by the Porte to Bekir Pasha, who now arrived with three thousand men, and halted on the left bank of the Kolubara, Karageorge being on the opposite side with a force twice as large. A cautious exchange of compliments took place; Karageorge declared the willingness of the Serbians to remain loyal subjects of the Sultan, but at the same time their determination not to be governed any longer by the Janissaries; Bekir Pasha made a fair answer, but was amazed and highly displeased at what he saw. Instead of the peasant rabble that he had pictured in his mind, here was a fully organized army, with leaders, standards, and plenty of war material, which had been taken as booty from the Turks or brought across the Danube.

The Janissaries' Dahis, in the meantime,

realizing the danger of their own position, fled secretly from Belgrade and took refuge further down the Danube in the island fortress of New Orsova; but the Serbians demanded from Bekir Pasha that their enemies should be delivered up, and obtained an order to that effect. The commandant of Orsova had to admit a party of Serbians into the citadel, whence they soon returned with the heads of the four Dahis. Hereupon Bekir declared that everything had now been accomplished that the Serbians could desire, and directed them to return to their villages and flocks.

Bekir, however, entirely misjudged the situation; order and safety were not yet restored; Belgrade and the southern fortresses of the Pashalik were still filled with riotous bands of Janissaries and irregular troops. Then again, though the Serbians had taken up arms only through urgent necessity and actual peril to their lives, and against the open enemies of the Sultan, it was not to be expected that having defeated their foes, they would meekly return to their former condition. They now regarded as their real chiefs, not the Pasha and the Turkish land-

lords, but the men who had led them to battle; events had moved rapidly, and a new order of things was already within sight.

The Shaping of a Policy

The Serbians therefore continued to besiege Belgrade, and formulated a number of demands: that Karageorge should govern the land; that Serbian courts of justice be established; that the Turkish tax-gatherers be dismissed; that Belgrade should be garrisoned with Turks and Serbians in equal numbers; and that Karageorge should have a standing guard of five hundred men; Serbia to pay an annual tribute of half a million piastres. The Porte replied forthwith, granting these demands on condition that the Serbians at once laid down their arms and dispersed. This they refused to do until Belgrade should open its gates, and Bekir Pasha returned to winter in Bosnia without any settlement having been effected.

The intervention and support of a Christian Power, at this stage, was likely to prove of the utmost advantage, but the momentous question which the chiefs had to decide was

whether to apply to Austria or to Russia. Austria ruled over many of their kinsmen; it was to Austria, under whose banner many of them had volunteered during the last war, that the Serbians were indebted for their skill in warfare. But Austria had a bad record in the Balkans; as fickle in word and deed as the Porte itself, she had never retained the possessions which she acquired, but always handed back both land and people to the Turks. Moreover, she was at present concentrating her entire strength for a new conflict with Napoleon.

Toward Russia on the other hand they were attracted by a community of race, language, and religion; more important still, Russia had already extended to Moldavia and Valachia a protection of the kind which Serbia now desired, and had won from the Porte for these principalities freedom from Turkish occupation, freedom of religion, stability of government, and an equable rate of taxation. After much debate, a deputation was dispatched to Petrograd in August 1804. It returned early in 1805 with an answer favourable on the whole, though cautiously worded, in which Russia

promised to support the requests that Serbia intended to prefer at Constantinople.

Heartened by this assurance, the patriots immediately resumed hostilities against the Janissaries, and cleared them out of the whole valley of the Morava, undaunted by the fact that the Sultan was now determined to employ force to compel the Serbians to lay down their arms. They soon found themselves in a hazardous position, however. The Tsar, having joined forces with Austria against Napoleon, was already involved in the disastrous struggle the stages of which were marked by the defeats of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland; and the Porte, feeling secure from Russian interference, was taking strong action. A body of thirty thousand troops advanced on the Serbian frontier from Bosnia; a second and even stronger army advanced from Bulgaria along the Danube, and a third started from Nish along the Morava. Karageorge posted three small armies at the Iron Gates, on the right bank of the Drina, and at Krushevats respectively, and concentrated his reserve in the Shumadia to await events. Defeated in a first battle, the Bosnian army advanced anew in over-

whelming numbers, and scattered the Haiduks of Nenadovitch, who took refuge in the Shumadia, while the Bosnians advanced toward Belgrade. They were presently held up at Mishar by fifteen hundred Haiduks; Karageorge appeared a few days later with 7000 infantry, a few pieces of ordnance, and 2000 cavalry who made a flank attack. The Turks were completely routed, many were drowned in the Drina, and the whole of their camp and stores fell into the hands of the Serbians. The latter, 9000 strong, had beaten 30,000 of the best troops of the Porte.

Karageorge now hastened eastward to meet the 40,000 Albanians and Turks under Ibrahim Pasha who were battering at the Iron Gates. Ibrahim, rendered cautious by the defeat of the Bosnians, retreated into Bulgaria, proposed a truce, and began peace negotiations which were nearly completed on the basis of the entire independence of Serbia, when in October 1806 the Porte broke up the conference, having taken heart at the news of the defeat of Prussia and her allies at Jena. Hostilities were resumed in front of Belgrade, which was stormed by the Serbians in December. In June 1807

the town of Uzhitse was taken, and without any arrangement or treaty being concluded the Turkish yoke was shaken off for the time being.

First Steps toward Organization

There was still much to be done, however. The power was in the hands of turbulent Haiduks, whose quarrels Karageorge lacked any constituted authority to quell, and many of whom were already rallying round a young man who, during the recent fighting, had risen to some prominence, the wealthy Milosh Obrenovitch. The country had neither administration, nor laws, nor men of education capable of advising its leaders; the latter were illiterate; only a few of them could read, and hardly any could sign their name; there were none fitted to act as diplomatic agents at foreign courts. An appeal was made to the much better educated Serbs from the districts north of the Danube and the Save, a number of whom readily responded. Dr. Philippovitch, who had studied law in Russia, recommended that there should be a Senate of twelve members, one for each district, which was to meet at Belgrade,

and that the annual meetings of the Skupshtina, or assembly of the Kneses, be resumed. Tribunals were established, a census was taken, and the collection of the taxes got into working order; lastly, schools were founded in several towns, with a High School at Belgrade. Almost all the men who played a part of any importance in Serbia from 1820 to 1850 were educated at this first Belgrade High School.

While proceeding to set her house in order, Serbia was still diligently seeking alliances and succour abroad, with alternate appeals to Russia and to Austria, the Senate leaning toward Russia, which was at war with Turkey, while Karageorge would have preferred to keep in touch with Austria, and thus assure himself of the co-operation of the Austrian Serbs. As Austria made no response, the Senate requested Russia to send an agent to Serbia, or an official who should preside over their body and aid them in the work of national organization, and in June 1807 M. Rodophinikin was appointed agent in Belgrade, with instructions to assure the Serbians that the Tsar would use all occasions to help them "when once he had proofs of

their willingness to conform in all things to the initiative of the Russian Government." The latter was to garrison the Serbian fortresses, to supply Serbia with arms and ammunition, engineers, and physicians, and to establish a protectorate over the country.

This programme received a check through the defeat of Friedland and the treaty of Tilsit, which left Russia so exhausted that she was forced to conclude an armistice with the Turks and to leave Serbia to fight single-handed. Rodophinikin, however, remained at Belgrade, and notwithstanding his obnoxious Greek nationality, obtained considerable influence over the chiefs as well as the Senate. Austria now began to feel perturbed at the progress of Russian influence in Serbia, and entered into relations with Karageorge, urging the great advantages he would derive from Austrian protection. The sympathetic attitude of Karageorge brought him into direct conflict with the pro-Russian Senate, who began to intrigue with the Russian agent for the removal of Karageorge from the Government. At the same time Russia demanded explanations from Vienna, whereupon the Austrian Government first professed

total ignorance of the dealings with Karageorge, then laid the blame for them on some petty generals on the frontier. From this time onward Serbia, to her sorrow, became, and has remained, a pawn in the game of European diplomacy—the most important, perhaps, in the politics of the Near East.

Renewal of the Struggle

In 1808 began a new period of general unrest in the Balkans: the peacefully disposed Sultan Selim had been murdered by the Janissaries, and succeeded by the reactionary and fanatical Mahmud; Russia, at peace with Napoleon, had resumed war against the Porte; the unhappy Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina were calling to their kinsmen of Serbia, and Montenegro was bellicose. Karageorge thought the time had come to strike again; a small army crossed the frontier, inflicted on the Turks a bloody defeat at Suvodol, and destroyed the fortresses on the territory of Novibazar. Karageorge was rousing Montenegro and Herzegovina to action when he had to retrace his steps with all possible speed. A large Turkish army was advancing up the Danube and threatening

Belgrade. Once again the chiefs to whom the defence of this line was entrusted had quarrelled and failed to act in unison; Sindyelitch, left unsupported at Kamenitza, and overwhelmed, had blown up the fortress, involving attackers and attacked in a common doom; Miloje Petrovitch had evacuated Deligrad and left the eastern road open. Karageorge, having crossed the Shumadia, appeared on the left bank of the Morava just in time to check the inroad on this line of defence; the Turks advanced slowly down the right bank, while Karageorge kept in touch with them on his own side of the river, and sent an urgent appeal to the Tsar. A few Russian regiments were sent to take the Turkish regiments in the rear, and the latter were forced to beat a retreat (August 1809).

The struggle was renewed by the Porte in the spring of 1810, both on the Morava and on the western frontier. The Turks were again hurled back beyond Nish by combined Serbian and Russian forces, while in the west the town of Losnitsa held out until Karageorge had retraced his steps and brought the invasion to a standstill.

The Fatal Feud

The year 1811 was largely taken up with the constantly recurring strife between the party of Karageorge and insubordinate chiefs, among whom were to be counted the powerful Haiduk Veliko, and the Voyvode Milosh Obrenovitch. The latter's brother, Milan, a declared antagonist of Karageorge, had recently died mysteriously while on a journey to Bukharest, and it was declared that he had been poisoned by Karageorge's order; although the fact was neither proved nor probable, this sudden death of Milan was the origin of the fatal personal feud between the Karageorge and Obrenovitch houses, which for the next hundred years was to cast its shadow over the Serbian throne. For the time being, Karageorge had the support of the Skupshtina and the people, and he compelled his adversaries to submit or to leave the country.

It was, indeed, no time for internal discord: in 1812 Napoleon declared war on Russia, who had opened her ports to Great Britain, and the Tsar was compelled to make with the Porte, at Bukharest, a hasty treaty

in which the provision made for Serbia was anything but satisfactory. The Serbians were granted self-government, and a general amnesty, with the obligation to pay tribute and to hand over to the Sultan all the fortresses. Instead of an amnesty the Turks merely granted to all insurgents the right to emigrate; with the fortresses they demanded all arms and munitions of war; the Porte further insisted on the return of the Turks who had been driven out of the country, with the restitution of their estates. A conference held at Nish in December 1812 and January 1813 proved abortive: the Sultan insisted on the full *status quo ante*. Once again the Serbians lined their frontiers to resist invasion.

The Breakdown

Unsupported by any ally, Karageorge would have preferred to concentrate all his forces and to await the enemy in the mountains of the Shumadia. This has always been Serbia's most successful plan of campaign when hard pressed, and it was unquestionably the right one to adopt at this time. But those leaders who owned property near the frontiers in-

sisted on stationing the troops on the traditional outer lines of defence: the Drina, the Save, and the Danube. In the east, the Haiduk Veliko undertook the defence of Negotin against an army of 60,000 men; after a long siege and a formidable bombardment, during which he looked in vain for relief from Karageorge, Veliko was killed on the ramparts, and his Haiduks, left leaderless, dashed through the lines of the enemy and took to the mountains. The invasion of the Morava valley, which followed, was marked by atrocities as revolting as any that sully the pages of Turkish history; men were everywhere impaled, and children cast alive into boiling water in parody of the sacrament of baptism. In the west, the army, threatened by a body of 100,000 troops, remained inactive at Shabats, awaiting instructions from Karageorge. The latter, entrenched in the Shumadia, or according to others lying sick in his village of Topola, surrounded by growing numbers of despondent fugitives, as the Serbians lost battle after battle, seemed unable to cope with the situation. After some weeks of hesitation, and of belated attempts to carry succour east and west, he received news

of the loss of the positions on the Morava ; Belgrade lay open to the invaders, and overwhelmed by the completeness of the disaster, on December 4th, 1813, Karageorge and the Senate crossed the Save and took refuge in Austria. Serbia was left without a Government, the terrified people without an acknowledged leader, while the Turkish armies overran the country and took revenge in their accustomed fashion for the nine years of resistance that had been offered to them.

V : MILOSH OBRENOVITCH

The Second Rising

AMIDST the general panic and *débâcle*, one man had remained cool enough to gauge the situation and grasp the possibilities which it offered both to the country and to his own ambitions : Milosh Obrenovitch, instead of abandoning the country, had gathered his partisans round him and taken refuge in the Shumadia. Cunning, unscrupulous, and unfathomable, yet a patriot, and better fitted than Karageorge to play against the Turks their own game of duplicity and bribery, he allowed the first onset of savagery and pillage to pass, and waited until the Turkish leaders themselves found it advisable to restrain their troops. He then issued forth, sought an interview with the commander-in-chief, Kurschid Pasha, made his submission to the Sultan, in his own name and that of the nation, and offered himself as a mediator between the Turks and the Serbian people. His services were gladly accepted, and he contrived to

obtain for the prisoners of war and for the poorer people concessions that laid them under a debt of gratitude, and enormously increased his influence. Under a cloak of loyalty to the Porte, he was carefully preparing for a new rising, and he judged the favourable moment to have arrived after the overthrow of Napoleon in 1814. An irresponsible patriot named Hadgi Prodan had initiated a rebellion in the south at the end of that year, and during the ensuing agitation it had become obvious to the Turks that the Serbians had not given up all their arms in the previous year. Emissaries of the Pasha were scouring the country and using every possible means to force the people to reveal their hidden stores. Men and women were being flogged to death, tortured by thirst, hung by their feet with their head buried in ashes, stretched on the rack, impaled, roasted alive; suspicion had at last fastened on Milosh himself, and he knew that his life hung on a thread.

On Palm Sunday, 1815, he appeared in the village of Takkovo, dressed in his voyvode's costume, and holding aloft the national flag. "Here I am," he said, "and here you are—

war to the Turks!" Acclaimed by the people as supreme chief, and soon reinforced by volunteers from Austria and Bosnia, Milosh began the campaign by a period of guerilla warfare which compelled the Turks to flee for safety across the Morava. The rapid advance of an army of 12,000 Ottoman troops from Belgrade produced a moment of panic, and Milosh was uncertain how to act when his beautiful young wife Liubitsa urged the patriots to take the field at any cost. The campaign was short and surprisingly successful; at Valyevo, Posharevats, Karanovats, Duplia, the Turks were beaten or brought to a halt; in the meantime the battle of Waterloo had been lost and won, and the aggressive spirit of the Porte was further chastened by the reappearance of Russia in the field of diplomacy, and consciousness of the fact that that country and Austria, relieved from the strain of continental war, were now at leisure to devote their attention to Ottoman affairs. So by a provisional arrangement that was come to in the autumn, Serbia recovered her autonomy, subject to the payment of a tribute and to the continued occupation of Belgrade by a Turkish garrison; at the same

time Milosh was acknowledged as the actual Chief of the Serbian nation.

The Death of Karageorge

Peace was no sooner secured, however, than that bane of Serbia, party strife and internal discord, immediately recommenced. The Archbishop of Belgrade and the voyvode Peter Moler, headed a movement against Milosh which cost them their lives. No sooner had they been executed than another tragic event occurred : Karageorge, who had been living in Russia for the last four years, reappeared in Serbia in July 1817, on the invitation of a group of Haiduks who wished to restore him to power, and took up his abode with the mayor of Semendria. Milosh sent a courier to Karageorge, directing him to leave the country at once, and wrote in threatening terms to the mayor. A few days later the head of Karageorge was brought to Milosh and laid at his feet. He had been, it would appear, murdered in his sleep ; but by whom, and at whose instigation, has remained a mystery, and one of the most controverted questions in Serbian history. The guilt has been commonly fastened on Milosh,

and the murder was undoubtedly one of a succession of similar deeds which have been directly due to the deadly animosity between the Karageorge and Obrenovitch houses, yet it has been argued that some one had overstepped his instructions, as Milosh, with his unimpulsive and calculating nature, could not but have realized the odium which he would incur through so foul an action. The significant fact remains that the elimination of Karageorge was followed on November 6th by the proclamation of Milosh, in an assembly of all the kneses and bishops, as Prince of Serbia.

Peace and Prosperity

The next few years brought new hope to the nation. During the War of Greek Independence, Milosh was careful not to compromise his country, and wrung from the Turks, in return for his neutrality, a number of valuable concessions ; the treaties of Akkerman (1826) and Adrianople (1829) definitely regularized the position of Serbia : the Porte solemnly acknowledged Russia's right to protect that country, which was granted religious liberty and internal autonomy, with

the right to choose her own prince, to dispense justice, and to raise the taxes for the tribute. By wholesale bribery Milosh obtained in Constantinople, in 1830, a formal recognition as hereditary Prince of Serbia, much to the displeasure of Russia; the Hattisherifs of June 6th and December 4th, 1834, settled the yet outstanding differences with the Porte; six of the districts that had been torn from Serbia were restored, the amount of the tribute was fixed, and Turkish occupation restricted to Belgrade.

During these years the consolidation of internal order and the development of the natural resources of the country proceeded apace. The increasing exportation of cattle and swine made a rapid improvement in the economic condition of the country. The customs levied on the Austrian frontier, which Milosh bought from the Turks, produced a continually increasing revenue. The priests were given a regular income, and a theological seminary was established, as well as a number of normal schools for the training of teachers. The civil legislation was recast on the basis of the Code Napoleon, and the system of taxation simplified.

M. Nikola Pashitch

Supported by his armed partisans, Milosh unfortunately exercised his authority in a manner which before 1830 had already assumed the character of arbitrary despotism. He took possession at his own price of whatever he found desirable, land, houses, or mills, and burnt down one of the suburbs of Belgrade to rebuild it according to his fancy. He appropriated the monopoly of the most lucrative trades, enclosed the common land on which he reared his swine, and exacted from the people service akin to the mediæval *corvée;* thus the peasantry of Uzhitse were compelled to proceed yearly to Kraguyevats to cut and stack his hay.

The First Constitution

While the Prince's ambitious designs for the independence of his country awakened alarm and distrust in Russia, his arbitrary rule, and his haughty attitude toward the leaders, called forth bitter opposition from within. Agitation succeeded agitation; the chiefs who had accompanied Karageorge into exile had now returned to Serbia, and were either conspiring against Milosh or calling aloud for a Constitution. At last, an elaborate

plot which was discovered in 1834 made Milosh realize the gravity of the situation; he promised to convoke the Skupshtina and to grant reforms. A Constitution was elaborated on a French model. The National Assembly was to meet every year, and to have the right to initiate new legislation; legislative power, however, would be vested in the Prince and in a Senate; personal liberty and security of property were guaranteed, and serfdom was to be abolished.

This elaborate scheme was accepted by the Skupshtina in February 1835, although it contained many inconsequences and was fundamentally unsuited to the simple and patriarchal life of the Serbians. No sooner was it proclaimed than it was denounced with wonderful unanimity by Russia, Austria, and the Porte; Russia immediately sent to Belgrade a special agent, Baron Rickmann, who requested to know how the Serbians had dared to compile, "from all kinds of republican theories," a Constitution which no European cabinet could approve, and which was incompatible with the principles of the Turkish Empire. Milosh asserted the right of Serbia, since her inner autonomy had been guaranteed

by Russia, to make whatever Constitution she chose, and decided to ignore Baron Rickmann, and to go to Constantinople to confer personally with the Russian Ambassador. He made the journey in state, was treated with every mark of respect by the Turkish authorities at the different points of his route, and was received in solemn audience by the Sultan, who made him many costly presents. Russian diplomacy witnessed with displeasure this cordiality between Serbia and the Porte, although Milosh easily allowed himself to be persuaded that the Constitution wrung from him was unworkable. On his return he allowed it to remain a dead letter, much to the general indignation.

Acute friction now arose from another quarter. During his stay in Constantinople, Milosh, intent on placing Serbia under the protection of the great Western Powers of Europe, as a check to Russian influence, had persuaded the representatives of several of these Powers to send agents to Belgrade. Lord Palmerston appointed as British agent Colonel Hodges, a man of handsome appearance and winning manners, already famous for his heroic conduct as chief of an English

Legion in Portugal during the conflict with Don Pedro. The arrival of Colonel Hodges, and the ascendancy which he soon acquired over Milosh, involved Serbia in the diplomatic struggle between Britain and Russia, which was one of the features of Eastern politics throughout the nineteenth century. Although Colonel Hodges was a loyal and judicious adviser, this conflict, in which Russia openly supported the adversaries of Milosh, could not but prove injurious to the country; Hodges laboured in vain to reconcile the hostile chiefs, Vutchitch, Petronievitch, and Simitch, with the ruling Prince. In the meantime Russia and the leaders of the malcontents were working hand in hand with the Porte to impose on Milosh a Council or Senate that should share, and in reality limit, his authority. It was proposed that the Councillors should be elected for life, and to this Milosh refused to accede, while Colonel Hodges strongly urged the Porte to waive this point and to consent to a Council with a limited term of office, especially as no provision was being made for any regular consultation of the people in the affairs of the nation.

The outcome was a defeat for British influence: discussion was cut short on December 24th by a so-called 'organic statute' imposing upon Milosh a controlling Senate of seventeen members, appointed for life. The Prince was forced to submit, and to take a share in appointing to the new body a number of men who were either openly or secretly hostile to him.

The Fall of Milosh

In spite of Colonel Hodges' warnings, Milosh had always underrated the strength of the opposition to his rule and the danger of his position, but the real meaning, intentions, and power of the new Council were soon made unmistakably plain. Deadlocks occurred at once, and within a month had reached a climax. Milosh, after twenty years of absolute rule, would not submit to be governed and called to account, and made a rash endeavour to put down the Senate by force of arms. Colonel Hodges was at the time taking a short holiday in Hungary. The Senate put the Prince under arrest, convoked the Skupshtina, and with its support offered him the choice between immediate abdication

in favour of his eldest son Milan, or deposition and trial by a national court of justice. Milosh abdicated on June 12th, and crossed the Save on the 15th. As he took leave of the crowds that stood on the bank watching his departure, Vutchitch threw a stone into the river, exclaiming: "When this stone returns from the bottom, you shall return to Serbia again!" yet Milosh expressed the conviction that he should die as Serbia's reigning sovereign.

VI: ALEXANDER KARAGEORGEVITCH

Prince Michael's First Attempt to Rule

MILAN OBRENOVITCH, when he succeeded his father, was in the last stages of consumption, and died on July 8th, whereupon his brother Michael was chosen as Prince, with the assent of the Porte. As he was only seventeen years of age, Vutchitch and Petronievitch were appointed by the Senate as regents. These men were bitterly hostile to the Obrenovitch house, and had actually invited the son of Karageorge to return to Serbia in order to ingratiate himself with the people and to prepare them for a change of dynasty. The Porte realized that such a regency could only breed civil discord, and proclaimed Michael of full age. Vutchitch and Petronievitch were retained as 'Cabinet Councillors,' however, until the young Prince, supported by the people, removed the seat of government to Kraguyevats, out of the reach of the

Turkish garrison in Belgrade, and dismissed the two late regents, who took refuge in Constantinople. The Porte, and also Russia, who had until then viewed these men with disfavour, but who now felt even more uneasy at the independent attitude of Michael, immediately began to press for their recall to responsible posts; and as the Prince would not give way, an aide-de-camp to the Tsar, Baron Lieven, was dispatched to Belgrade to reconcile him with his opponents. Michael at last decided to give an example of generosity, and in 1841 recalled Vutchitch and Petronievitch.

His action cost him dear: no sooner were the Councillors back in Serbia, and reinstated in positions of influence, than they boldly organized an armed rebellion, and in the middle of the summer of 1842 fortified themselves on a hill near Kraguyevats. Michael advanced against them with a body of 12,000 cavalry and infantry which had been packed with traitors, and which broke and fled at the first encounter; by the end of August his army had crumbled away, and the only course left open to him was to confess that his attempt to rule had been a failure, and to

cross over to Austria. On September 14th an assembly of the people, convoked in Belgrade, and strongly influenced by the able and astute Eliya Garashanin, who was soon to become one of the foremost statesmen in Serbia, unanimously elected as Prince the son of Karageorge, Alexander Karageorgevitch.

Alexander Karageorgevitch

The new ruler, who was of a peace-loving and tractable disposition, was acknowledged by the Sultan on November 14th; but while Milosh and his sons had been proclaimed as hereditary princes, the Berat or Letter of Investiture addressed to Alexander did not even recognize him as elected for life; the Prince of Serbia sank to the level of a functionary whom the Porte could revoke at will. These limitations to his rule, in addition to those imposed by the Senate, were duly noted by the people, and Alexander's popularity was thus impaired from the beginning.

The Revolution of 1848

The five years of comparative quiet that followed were nevertheless marked by rapid

progress in the social and economic position of the country; Eliya Garashanin, who had been appointed Minister of the Interior, was doing much good work in the cause of education, and Serbia was learning to devote herself to the arts of peace, when in 1848 the whole of Europe was suddenly agitated by a violent upheaval. In Paris the people had risen against the government of King Louis-Philippe and proclaimed a Republic; and this democratic trumpet-call, following that of 1830, which had re-echoed so ominously through Europe, was the signal for wide-spread popular risings. Prussia, Holland, Switzerland were compelled immediately to grant liberal reforms. Those countries in which the 'principle of nationalities' had since 1840 become a rallying cry were emboldened to take up arms and fight for their independence. Thus began the movement which ultimately led to the integration of Italy; thus began that struggle for the disintegration of the 'ramshackle' Austrian Empire, the end of which is not yet. To the Hungarian rebellion of 1848 we must now give some attention, as it is intimately connected with Serbian affairs.

The Southern Slav Population of Hungary

Among the many races which make up the population of Hungary, the principal are the Serbo-Croats in the districts to the immediate north of the Danube and the Save, and the Magyars, the descendants of the Huns, who amount also to a large percentage of the whole. Czechs and Slovaks are also to be found in the north. Toward the Croats and Serbs, as toward the remainder of the hotch-potch of races in Hungary, the attitude of the Magyars has ever been arrogant, overbearing, and contemptuous ; to this lack of sympathy for, and aloofness from their neighbours and fellow-fighters against the Turks and other enemies may be largely attributed the fact that during a period extending to several centuries, no fusion of the various peoples of Hungary ever took place, and that the Serbs and Croats wholly retained their racial entity.

The Policy of ' Magyarization '

During the twenty years before 1848, the Magyars had entered upon a policy of subjugation or of Magyarization of the Serbo-

Croats which had evoked the bitterest opposition. Until this time a babel of tongues had been avoided in the Hungarian Diet through the use of Latin as the official medium of communication and discussion; but in 1832 the Magyars had passed a measure substituting Hungarian for Latin not only in the Diet and in all State departments, but also in all civil acts. Even the Croatian and Serbian Churches had been compelled to issue birth and other certificates in Hungarian. Prince Metternich, the Austrian statesman who had been a leader in the Congress of Vienna, was still, after more than thirty years, at the head of affairs in Austria. He had done more than any man in Europe to maintain and encourage despotism, and faithful to his policy had given official sanction to this wholesale banishment of the Serbian language, in spite of the protests and insurrections which had greeted the measure. Thus had the seed been sown which was now to bear its fruit.

The Serbo-Croat Rising

On March 13th, 1848, the French revolutionary movement spread to Vienna, and the ministry of Metternich was overthrown;

within a few weeks Hungary, Bohemia, and Italy were fighting for independence. The Croats, immediately after the flight of Metternich, sent a deputation of four hundred members to the Emperor, to complain of Magyar oppression. Jellachitch, the Ban or Ruler of Croatia, who had gained distinction in fighting against the Turks, issued a proclamation to the people, in which he stated that recent occurrences had rendered impossible any community of social or political life with the Magyars, advocated the establishment of a new *régime* based on independence and unity, to which a difference in religious creeds between members of the same people need be no bar, and invited the clergy of both the Orthodox and the Catholic faiths, and all the people of Slavonic blood, to enter into a bond of brotherhood. This significant manifesto produced a deep impression: the Magyars were threatened with that unification of the Serbs and Croats which they had consistently striven to prevent.

The Serbo-Croat coalition speedily became a reality; the Serbian Metropolitan, Rayachitch, convoked a Skupshtina which met at Karlowitz on May 1st. A Serbian Voyvodate

was established and delimited so as to include Sirmia, Baranya, Batshka, and the Banat. The Serbian Patriarchate was restored, and the Serbs north of the Danube proclaimed independent under the rule of the Austrian dynasty and the Hungarian crown. Hungary was to form a triple Monarchy with equal rights and autonomy for Magyars, Czechs, and Serbs. A national committee, including a number of members from Serbia proper, was next appointed to direct national affairs, to fix more definitely the limits of the Voyvodate, to frame a Constitution, and to arrange for the holding of a Slav Congress at Prague.

The Magyars, who were already in rebellion against Austria, immediately took steps to repress this movement. Rayachitch was sharply rebuked for allowing his residence to become the centre of the Serbian agitation, and enjoined to remove the seat of the ecclesiastical meetings to Temisvar. Rayachitch replied in Serbian that the ecclesiastical meetings would be discontinued, now that the Serbian Voyvodate had its own Skupshtina. The Magyar leaders rejoined that they could not find on the map of the Monarchy any such country as a Serbian Voyvodate, but only

Austrian and Hungarian provinces, and that any who wished to assert their Serbian nationality were free to 'cross the rivers.' At the same time part of the Hungarian army was sent to the south, while Jellachitch and the Serbian National Committee called their people to arms. Austrian troops were immediately ordered to the aid of Jellachitch, but their departure was prevented by the democracy of Vienna, who sympathized with the Magyars and rose in violent insurrection. The Emperor, for the second time, fled to Innsbruck, and war became general. A strong army was sent to subdue the rebellious city, which was stubbornly defended. Jellachitch led his Croatians and Serbs to the aid of the Austrian troops, and after a week of bloody fighting Vienna was stormed and the leaders of the insurrection put to death.

Serbia's Difficult Position

In this crisis the Hungarian Serbs had appealed to their kinsmen in Serbia for help, and a great number of volunteers had responded to the call; the Government of Prince Alexander was thus placed in a very difficult

position. The Hungarian Serbs were in arms, not only for their national autonomy, but also for rights and liberties that the Government of the Principality was denying to its own people. To attempt to stem the tide of popular feeling would have seriously impaired what little popularity Alexander enjoyed; yet Russia and the Porte insisted on Serbia maintaining the strictest neutrality. A National Assembly, hastily convoked, endorsed the attitude of Russia, thus relieving the Government of some responsibility, and the Tsar, in token of approval, sent Alexander Karageorgevitch his Order of the White Eagle together with an autograph letter. This, however, did not check the flow of departing volunteers, and ministerial anxiety was increased by the fact that the exiled Princes Milosh and Michael were giving generous pecuniary help to the Hungarian Serbs, and by their active assistance, were winning general sympathy. To counteract this dreaded influence large quantities of ammunition were sent across the rivers, and when Russia was called upon to intervene in Austria, a Senator named Knichanin crossed over to Hungary to put himself at the head of the volunteers. He showed great

courage and skill, and fought brilliantly against the Magyar troops.

The 'Old Order of Things' restored

For in the meantime the abdication of Ferdinand in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph, and the proclamation of a new constitution, had not pacified Hungary, and the Austrians had taken the field against the insurgents. The latter numbered 100,000 men, mostly untrained, and were opposed by 150,000 imperial troops and Serbo-Croats. But for the incredible incapacity of the Austrian generals, the war ought not to have lasted two months. The Magyars, however, inflamed by Kossuth and brilliantly led by Görgey, drove the Austrians from their positions, and defeated Jellachitch at Lake Balaton. Austria was compelled to invoke the aid of Russia, who had viewed with the greatest anxiety the general effervescence in Europe, and who responded readily; the insurgent state was now invaded on three sides, by the Serbo-Croats from the south, the Russians from the north, and from the west by the Austrians under the notorious general Haynau, 'the hyena of Brescia.'

The conflict continued for several months, and Görgey did not surrender until August 1849. Haynau hanged eleven of the revolutionary generals in one day, and earned fresh infamy by his treatment of the Hungarian people, and particularly by his use of the lash upon women. Some of our readers may remember that he was mobbed when he dared to visit London in 1850. All that can be said in extenuation of his 'frightfulness' is that the Magyars had themselves committed during the campaign many acts of savagery. At Mohol, on June 29th, 1848, they had effected a mock reconciliation with 500 Serbs, induced them to lay down their arms, and then opened fire on the defenceless band, killing a large number in cold blood. Similar, and worse, actions against the civil population of the Military Frontier had driven many Serbian families to flight across the rivers.

With the fall of Görgey Austria emerged triumphant from these eighteen months of strife, restored the old order of things, and 'astonished the world by the greatness of her ingratitude.' None were more ill requited for their defence of the Austrian crown than the Slavs of the Military Frontier. The

Serbian provinces were granted the empty title of Voyvodate, with the promise of a Constitution and a ruler, but the pledges were never fulfilled. The Serbs had to be content with the assumption of the title of Grand Voyvode of the Serbian Voyvodate by the Emperor himself.

The Crimean War

Within the Serbian Principality, the popularity of Alexander was not enhanced by the decorations which Francis Joseph conferred on him "for contributing to the salvation of the dynasty and the integrity of the Empire." Garashanin, who was now President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, equally distrusted Russia and Austria, and sought to gain support for Serbia in the West, and particularly in France. This policy, at the beginning of the diplomatic conflict which was to lead to the Crimean War, was intolerable to Russia, who demanded, and compelled, the immediate dismissal of the offending minister and the recall to power of Vutchitch and other Russophil statesmen. The outbreak of hostilities in the Crimea in 1854 placed the Principality in a very difficult

and complicated position. Both Turkey, the suzerain Power, and Russia, the protectress, expected and demanded Serbian support; while Austria, in requital of Russian assistance in 1849, peremptorily forbade Serbia to take any part in the conflict, under a threat of invasion, a threat that was first supported, and later discouraged, by France and England. The outcome was that Serbia took no part in the war, that Russia was compelled profoundly to modify her plan of campaign, and that she thereafter attributed to Alexander's non-intervention her ultimate defeat. As a reward for her neutrality, the Principality was placed by the Treaty of Paris under a joint protectorate of the Great Powers, while the Porte retained the right to garrison the fortresses.

Unpopularity of Alexander

The people approved of none of these measures, and Alexander's continual subservience to Austria, at the expense of Russia, was so distasteful that there was a recrudescence of plotting against the Prince. In October 1857 a conspiracy was discovered in which a number of councillors, including the

Presidents of the Senate and of the High Court, were implicated. The conspirators were tried *in camera* and condemned to death; the Powers, however, intervened, and would not allow the sentence to be carried out. Alexander's position was becoming untenable. The majority of the nation plainly desired the return of the Obrenovitch family, while a not inconsiderable 'French' party were advocating that Garashanin, who had returned to power after the defeat of Russia, should be chosen as Prince.

To regain his waning prestige, Alexander decided to make a tour of the country, in order to give the people personal assurance of his devotion and goodwill. Garashanin and Vutchitch thereupon joined hands and organized a rival series of meetings, in which ministerial delegates denounced and blackened the Prince, and demanded the immediate convocation of a National Assembly. Thus Serbia offered the uncommon spectacle of a conflict between an entirely worthy and well-meaning monarch and his own Ministers of State. Alexander saw himself compelled to convoke a Skupshtina, which met on November 30th (O.S.),

1858, St Andrew's Day, and which is known in Serbian annals as the 'St Andrew's Skupshtina.' The Assembly immediately showed itself hostile to the Prince, drew up a list of grievances, and appointed a commission of seventeen members to "see to the welfare of the State." This commission at once called upon Alexander to abdicate, and the next day the Assembly, amid enthusiastic rejoicings of the people, but to the great astonishment and disappointment of Garashanin and Vutchitch, proclaimed the restoration to power of the Obrenovitch dynasty, in the person of old Prince Milosh. All this was accomplished in a couple of days, without protest or disturbance; never was there so swift and pacific a revolution. What had been effected deserves this name, for it was much more than a change of dynasty. Not only was it a severe blow to Austrian prestige and influence, but Garashanin, Vutchitch, and the oligarchy which had ruled the country for the last fifteen years were totally undone. In the words of Ranke: "As in 1789 the French aristocracy forced Louis XVI to convoke the National Assembly which annihilated the aristocracy itself, so did the Serbian Senate

which was composed of aristocratic usurpers of power, compel Prince Alexander to call together the Skupshtina which finally deprived the Senators themselves of their influence." Toward the memory of Alexander there is to-day in Serbia no ill-will ; the record of his private life is clean, and he was undoubtedly devoted to the welfare of his people ; but he ruled under so unsatisfactory a *régime*, and during a period of such extreme political tension in the Balkans, that none but a statesman of the first order, gifted with more astuteness than moral uprightness, could have governed with what is commonly understood as ' credit and success.'

VII: MICHAEL OBRENOVITCH

The Return of Milosh

Milosh, who was at Bukharest, was immediately recognized by Napoleon III and by the Tsar; Turkey was compelled to follow suit. Austria gave a childish display of hostility: she forbade the Danubian Navigation Company to place any boat at the disposal of the Prince, who nevertheless made a triumphal entry into Belgrade on January 2nd, 1859. "My only care in the future," he said to the people, "will be to make you happy, you and your children whom I love as well as my only son, *the heir to your throne*, Prince Michael." Thus Milosh immediately manifested his will that the title of Prince should be hereditary in his family, whatever might be the views of the Porte.

He was now seventy-eight years of age, but had lost none of his self-reliance and energy of mind. He at once made a resistance to the encroachments of Austria and Turkey,

dared the former Power to interfere with the importation of arms into Serbia, and ordered the Turkish soldiers whom he now found policing the streets of Belgrade to withdraw within the Citadel. In his dealings with the people and with the servants of the State he was as autocratic as in the past, but much was forgiven him for his own sake and for that of Prince Michael, on whom the people built the highest hopes.

The Skupshtina in the meantime proclaimed the heredity of the princely dignity within the Obrenovitch family, and made provision for a regency in case a minor should succeed to the title. The Porte, in high dudgeon at not being consulted, refused to ratify these decrees, but Milosh was in no wise daunted; on May 7th, 1860, he sent a deputation to Constantinople to demand (1) the recall of all Turks residing in Serbia, except those of the frontier garrisons, according to the agreement made in 1830; (2) confirmation of his right to the hereditary title. As the Porte gave an evasive answer, he solemnly declared before the Skupshtina, on August 22nd, that the Serbian people, without any regard for the Sultan's suzerainty, would thenceforth

consider the two points mentioned above as having the force of law.

A month after he had thus asserted the independence of his country, Milosh died, and was succeeded without discussion by his son Michael, "in conformity with the law of 1859." This was a direct challenge to the Sultan, who nevertheless granted a Berat or Letter of Investiture. It had been the custom that the Prince should appear at the gates of the Citadel to hear this document read by the Commissioner of the Porte, but Michael instructed the Pasha to hand it in at the Palace. The time was past for feudal subserviency.

The Reforms of Prince Michael

Michael was thirty-seven years old. A highly gifted and intelligent man, he had travelled extensively during his sixteen years of exile, had visited Berlin, Paris, London, given close attention to Western ideas and institutions, and returned to Belgrade determined to take for his device : " The law is the supreme authority in Serbia." He realized that his country had outgrown the ' patriarchal ' and therefore autocratic and arbitrary rule of his predecessors, and more

especially of his father. His ambition was to complete the emancipation of his country, to obtain the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from the fortresses, to restore the ancient Serbian kingdom, and to unite with it Bosnia and Herzegovina, that were still under the Turkish yoke; but acting on his motto '*Tempus et meum ius*,' he devoted himself in the first place to the immediate necessities of the situation. These were the reconciliation of the different political factions, the restriction of the powers of the Senate, which had made the rule of Alexander a mere sham, and the organization of the army. He showed great generosity and magnanimity to his most bitter opponents, placed several of them in responsible posts, and entrusted to Garashanin himself the formation of the first Cabinet. In August 1861 he issued regulations making the seventeen Senators severally answerable to the courts of law, and ordaining that the Skupshtina should meet every three years. The raising of the army had been until then a calling up of the clans, who responded or not as they thought fit; a conscript army was now organized and equipped on Western models, with a

national militia as a reserve force. Turkey, England, and especially Austria strongly objected to this step, but the Prince had the support of Russia and France, and the reform was carried through.

The Question of the Fortresses

An opportunity now offered itself to deal with the question of the fortresses. The Turks, in spite of treaty obligations, continued to dwell in one of the suburbs of Belgrade, in proximity to the Citadel. They had their own magistrates and police, and all the measures taken by the Serbian police for the order, security, and health of the population were nullified or obstructed by the ignorance, indolence, and squalor of the Turkish authorities and people; thus frequent collisions occurred, and intercourse between Moslems and Christians had lately grown more and more bitter and dangerous. On June 15th, 1862, a Turkish serjeant killed a Serbian youth at a public fountain in Belgrade, and the Serbian police commissioners who intervened were fired upon by the Turkish soldiers and killed. The Serbian population thereupon attacked the guardhouses, and drove all

the Turks, soldiers, and citizens into the Citadel. The next day, while feeling still ran high, the commander of the Citadel bombarded the town during five hours. Although no very great damage was done foreign consuls made a strong protest, and Prince Michael demanded that a conference of the Powers should be held to put an end to so intolerable a situation. The conference was opened at Constantinople in July, and on September 4th, in spite of Austrian and British opposition, the ambassadors drew up a protocol compelling the Turks to evacuate all the fortresses except Belgrade, Feth Islam, Shabats, and Smederevo. All Ottomans who still resided in Serbia were to be withdrawn, Serbia undertaking to compensate those who were landowners. This arrangement by no means satisfied the Serbian demands, but on the representations of Sir Henry L. Bulwer, who came to Belgrade to confer with Michael and Garashanin, it was accepted as 'half a loaf.' Princess Julia, Michael's gifted wife, came to London at this time, and was successful in gaining the ear of prominent statesmen and in pleading the cause of her people. From her visit may be dated the beginning of that 'friendly' interest in

Serbia on the part of Great Britain, the happy effects of which soon became manifest.

Michael continued to work for the complete evacuation of the fortresses; he concluded alliances with Montenegro, Greece, and Rumania, brought the numbers of his army up to 100,000 men, re-armed the troops with modern weapons, and kept in close touch with European diplomacy. His chance came in 1866, with the temporary ruin of Austrian prestige after the battle of Königgrätz, the appointment of Lord Derby as Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the difficulty which the Porte was experiencing in quelling Christian unrest in Turkey. On October 29th, in a letter to the Grand Vizier, Michael courteously urged that the Sultan should give up the perfectly nugatory right to garrison Serbia. Pressure from the friendly Powers at Constantinople induced the Sultan to consent, the last Turkish soldiers were recalled, and no token remained of the vassality of Serbia except the yearly tribute, and the Turkish Crescent waving over the Citadel of Belgrade beside the Serbian Tricolour.

Michael now applied himself to the problem of Bosnia, which was groaning under Turkish

misrule and oppression ; he made no secret of his desire to add this province to the Principality, and Paris, Vienna, and London viewed with some alarm the unfaltering policy and undisguised ambitions of the Serbian ruler. That Bosnia would be happier and more prosperous under Serbian management was, however, obvious to all, and as remonstrances availed nothing, France and Great Britain, to avoid a conflict, were considering the advisability of placing Bosnia under the temporary protection of Prince Michael, when the nation, and indeed all Europe, was startled by the news of the most tragic occurrence in Serbian history.

The Death of Prince Michael

During the months of March and April 1868 a small faction of ' irreconcilables ' had been scheming and plotting to remove the reigning Prince and restore the Karageorgevitch dynasty. In these designs they were aided and abetted by Austria, who, always hostile to the Obrenovitch family, now viewed with grave alarm the favour in which Michael stood with several of the Powers and the possibility of his extending his rule to Bosnia, which Austria

was already bent on acquiring. Indeed any increase in strength and influence on the part of Serbia constituted a threat to Austria, for already that country's gaze was fixed on Salonika, and the way thither lay over the prostrate body of the little inland State. The partisans of Karageorgevitch, however, realized the hopelessness of attempting to work on the feelings of either the people or the Assembly, and the only feasible plan was to murder the Prince and his ministers, and to take advantage of the confusion and terror which would ensue to seize the reins of government. Rumours of conspiracy had for some time been rife, but Michael had refused to take action until convincing evidence should be forthcoming.

Within half an hour's drive from Belgrade there is a national park called Topchidere, surrounded by dense forest ; here the Prince had a summer residence, and he was accustomed to stroll through the woods every afternoon, *en famille*, and attended only by an aide-de-camp and a footman. Here, on the evening of June 10th, four men, two of whom belonged to the criminal class, while another was a lawyer recently imprisoned for forgery,

awaited the Prince's coming. On the outskirts of the woods the head of the conspiracy, an attorney named Radovanovitch, was ready, on a signal from the murderers, to drive to Belgrade, let loose the gang who were to seek out and put to death the more prominent ministers, and take over the Government. A list of new State officials was already drawn up, and the whole plot arranged with German thoroughness and attention to detail.

When Prince Michael had passed, in the company of three lady relatives, and attended by a son of Garashanin and a lackey, the party was shot from behind by the ambushed assassins; the Prince and one of the ladies were killed on the spot, and Garashanin's son wounded. The other ladies and the lackey fled, shrieking for help. The murderers were too intent on cutting and slashing the bodies of their dead victims to remember that every minute was precious, and when Radovanovitch reached Belgrade, news of the deed had preceded him; the garrison was under arms and the Minister of War in command; the plot had failed. Serbia had indeed suffered, in the person of this capable, patriotic and upright ruler, an

irreparable loss, but the Assembly immediately proclaimed as Prince, Michael's adopted son, Milan, a grand-nephew of the famous Milosh. The murderers and their instigators paid the full penalty of their crime, after Michael had been laid to rest in the cathedral of Belgrade, mourned and regretted as befitted a prince who had deserved so well of his people. Not only had he definitely asserted the independence of Serbia, but under his rule all branches of education, from the elementary schools upward, had been organized on the Western model ; the civil, penal and commercial codes had been brought into harmony with modern requirements ; the basis of taxation had been broadened; a Ministry of War and a Military Academy had been instituted, and an army of 150,000 men entitled Serbia to assert her rank among the smaller Powers.

VIII: MILAN OBRENOVITCH

MILAN, the only surviving Obrenovitch, was at that time being educated in Paris at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, and moving too freely, for a boy of fourteen, in that questionable society of which Alphonse Daudet has left a searching and upon the whole faithful record in *Les Rois en Exil*. It is permissible to conjecture that the atmosphere of an English public school would have been more wholesome for a youth of his precocity, and that to his unfortunate environment in Paris were largely due the weaknesses which developed in the character and conduct of a ruler who combined great personal charm with intellectual endowments of no mean order. On his arrival in Belgrade on the 23rd of June, the Assembly appointed, to conduct the government until his majority, a Regency composed of Blaznavats, the Minister of War, Senator Gavrilovitch, a man of great experience and considerable literary attainments, and Jovan Ristitch, who had been

Serbian minister at Constantinople, Foreign Minister, and since 1865 President of the Council.

The Constitution of 1869

The Regents, among whom Ristitch was the outstanding figure, first secured from the Porte an acknowledgment of Milan as hereditary Prince, and then set themselves to frame a constitution which should give some satisfaction to the conflicting parties in the State. The most difficult question to be solved was the nature of the representation to be granted to the people; the law declared State officials and lawyers ineligible as members of the Assembly; these officials formed almost the totality of the educated people, as 95 per cent. of the adult male population were agriculturists and artisans, yet it was feared that if they were declared eligible, they would speedily fill all the seats in the Assembly, which would then become representative not of the nation, but of a bureaucracy. The following compromise was at last agreed upon: the legislative power was vested in the Prince and the Assembly. The latter, elected for three years, would

meet yearly, and control the budget. It would consist of 120 members, ninety of whom would be chosen by the nation, State officials and lawyers not being eligible, while the remaining thirty were to be chosen by the Prince from all classes and professions. Questions of great national importance were to be submitted to a specially convoked 'Great National Assembly' of 480 members.

This experiment in government was promulgated in 1869, and for a time appeared to work well. As a matter of fact the number of enlightened men remained at first in so small a minority in the Skupshtina that the Regents were practically masters of the country, supported by a colourless so-called 'Liberal' majority. The opposition, within and without the Assembly, gradually shaped itself into two groups. A 'Radical' party, educated chiefly at the Swiss universities, favoured restriction of the powers of the central government, and the largest possible amount of local autonomy; they had organized the better educated Serbian youth of the Balkans and of Hungary into a corporation called the *Omladina*, or 'Young Serbia,' with strong Great Serbian

tendencies, and this *Omladina* was active in Paris, Vienna, and Petrograd. On the other hand a so-called 'Progressive' party, largely bred in France and in Leipzig, argued from the late terrible catastrophe that the country could only be successfully ruled by a highly centralized and repressive authority on the French model (under Napoleon III), but favoured the expenditure of large sums of money to bring Serbia into line with the Western Powers. In the divergent programmes of the two opposition groups lay for a time the chief source of strength of the Government.

The War of 1876

Milan attained his majority in 1872, retained Ristitch as chief adviser, and won the goodwill of the people by a frankly Russophile policy, and by his antagonism to the Porte. The situation of Serbia's neighbours in Bosnia and Herzegovina had grown daily worse under Turkish misrule; it was indeed comparable to that of Serbia in 1804, and led to the same result, an insurrection which broke out in many quarters in 1875, and which conferences of the Powers, and pro-

grammes of reform submitted by the Porte, were equally unsuccessful in quelling. The atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria, early in 1876, precipitated a crisis, and at the end of June both Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey. The opening hostilities were favourable to Montenegro, but disastrous to Serbia, in spite of the leadership of the Russian general Chernyayev. Her 80,000 men were opposed by the pick of the Turkish army, 200,000 troops, including the Guard, under the famous general Osman Pasha. Then Milan made serious strategic mistakes; instead of marching into Bosnia and joining hands with the Montenegrins, he massed the greater part of his army on the Bulgarian frontier, to shield Belgrade, and sent only insignificant forces west and south. This dispersal of strength resulted in defeat on every side. By the end of July Serbia was invaded and the Turks were marching down the banks of the Morava. Chernyayev fought desperately at Alexinats, but saw his positions turned, and Milan was compelled to make an appeal to the Great Powers. Europe was sympathetic; in England the Liberal party, led by Gladstone, had

denounced the Bulgarian atrocities in a series of public meetings, and the *Daily News* had voiced the feeling of the country by declaring that if the only alternative was to leave Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina in the clutches of Turkey, or to allow these countries to come into the hands of Russia, then Russia might have them, and might God be with her! Disraeli was compelled to take action; on September 1st he called upon Turkey to grant an armistice, and presented to the Porte a pacification programme which would ensure the integrity of Serbia, and administrative autonomy in the insurgent provinces and in Bulgaria.

The Intervention of Russia

The Turks, however, acting on their recent experience of the pusillanimity and helplessness of European diplomacy, vouchsafed no answer, but proceeded with the campaign, and on October 29th completely defeated Chernyayev at Krushevats. The road to Belgrade was open, and Serbia might have succumbed, had not Russia decided to ignore the other Powers and to act alone. On October 31st her ambassador ordered the Porte

to sign an armistice within forty-eight hours or face the consequences, and the new Sultan, Abdul Hamid, was obliged to yield. Peace with Serbia, on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, was signed on March 1st, 1877. In these few months the Principality had lost heavily in men, and suffered at the hands of the Turks material damage amounting to almost £7,000,000.

In the meantime a conference of the Powers had met at Constantinople to discuss the general situation in the Balkans, and once again completely fooled by the Turks, had tamely broken up without arriving at any solution. Russia alone felt compelled to put some check on the revolting evils perpetrated at her very gates, and once again took independent action; war was declared on Turkey on April 24th. The armies of the Tsar, at first brilliantly successful, were brought to a halt before Plevna, and seriously threatened by Osman Pasha; Serbia, however, took the field again in December with 43,000 men, and effected an opportune diversion on the Turks' left flank, in the course of which she captured Pirot, Vrania, and Nish, and marched onward to the ill-

starred field of Kossovo, where after a space of five hundred years a solemn mass was once more celebrated at the shrine ('Grachanitsa') of Tsar Lazar. The Serbian threat deflected a considerable portion of the Turkish forces, thus enabling the army corps of General Gurko to cross the Balkan range, after which the Russian offensive was carried to the very gates of Constantinople.

The Peace of San Stefano

During the peace negotiations which ensued, Serbian expectations ran high. Ristitch forbore from claiming for Serbia direct representation at San Stefano, and was content to leave the interests of his country in the hands of Russia. But Russia was in a very difficult position; she had to deal not only with the Porte, but with the Powers, and to feel her way through a maze of conflicting interests; she was bent on the creation of a strong Bulgarian State as a barrier against the Turk in the eastern Balkans, and she was bound at the same time to recognize the services recently rendered by her ally. The Serbian claims, as transmitted to the Russian headquarters

by Colonel Katardgi, were : (1) the complete independence of Serbia ; (2) the annexation of Old Serbia and Macedonia, the Vilayet of Kossovo, Vidin, and the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar. Before the Peace of San Stefano could be ratified, however, it had already become obvious that its terms must be submitted to a wider tribunal. Great Britain strongly opposed the dismemberment of Turkey in Europe, while Austria, driven out of Italy, driven out of Germany, was more than ever bent on a policy of expansion in the Balkans, with Scutari and Salonika, the Adriatic and the Ægean, as her goals.

The Treaty of Berlin

Germany professed at that time complete detachment from those conflicting interests, "the Eastern Question not being worth the bones of one Pomeranian grenadier," so Prince Bismarck offered his services as 'honest broker,' and invited the Powers to meet in conference at Berlin. Serbia was represented by Jovan Ristitch, who was plainly told by Prince Gorchakov that Russia was bound to press the claims of Bulgaria, and that Serbia should look to Austria for

support. This support Austria offered at a price, namely special trading facilities, free access to Salonika, and the construction by Serbia of a railway line toward Constantinople. On these terms Austria recommended the complete independence of Serbia, and supported her claim for the possession of Pirot, Vrania, Nish, and Leskovats, after the heroic remnants of the Serbian army had rescued these cities from the hands of the Turks. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, both Russia and Great Britain had agreed, before ever the Berlin Conference opened, that they should come within the Austrian 'sphere of influence,' and at the Conference Austria further demanded that the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar be placed under the same *régime*. The avowed object of this latter clause was to prevent any direct communication between Serbia and Montenegro, and thus to keep Serbia far from the sea, and in strict economic dependence on Austria. The Principality's position was rendered even more insecure than in the past by the creation of two powerful independent neighbour States, East Rumelia and Bulgaria; and the Serbs taken as a whole, now dis-

membered into three fragments, with Austria thrust in between the two groups south of the Danube, were further removed than ever from their dream of union into one nation.

While at San Stefano Russia had endeavoured to achieve the emancipation of all the Christian populations in the Balkans; the Treaty of Berlin, taking into consideration neither fundamental justice nor the legitimate aspirations of the peoples concerned, thrust Macedonia back under Turkish misrule, created in Bosnia and Herzegovina a 'Balkanic Alsace-Lorraine,' and far from ensuring future peace, laid a sure foundation of disappointment, jealousy, and rancour for the conflicts which have arisen in our time.

Milan's Austrian Policy

Milan, who had hitherto been guided by Russia, now completely changed the policy of his Government, attached himself to Austria, and abode in Vienna for months at a time. As Ristitch refused to be dictated to by Austria in the negotiations of the year 1880 for a commercial treaty, he was dismissed and replaced by the 'Progressive'

ministers, Pirotshanats and Milutin Garashanin, son of Iliya Garashanin. The progressive programme of railway building, and lavish expenditure in other directions, doubled the yearly budget, and soon increased the public debt from £300,000 to £12,500,000; taxation rose to four times its former amount, and the revenue was largely mortgaged to foreign banks. While the Radical party, led by Nicholas Pashitch, indignantly clamoured for strict economy and for local autonomy at home, Milan's foreign policy was equally hateful to the majority of the nation. Agitation in Bosnia, where Austrian 'protection' had materialized into persecution of the adherents of the Orthodox Church, was ignored, as was also the nationalist movement of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes who under Miletitch were again striving to shake off Magyar oppression. In spite of his favourite minister Miyatovitch, Serbia's most acute diplomat at that time, who endeavoured to turn to the best account Austria's offers of friendship, Milan became a mere tool in the hands of that Power, and was induced to sign a secret treaty promising to Austria absolute possession of Bosnia

and Herzegovina in return for 'diplomatic support' of Serbia's aspirations to regain Old Serbia and Macedonia. This inane action, and the assumption by Milan of the title of King in 1882, exasperated both the Serbian people and Tsar Alexander III; an attempt was made to restore the Karageorgevitch dynasty in the person of Prince Peter, the son of Alexander Karageorgevitch, and in 1883 the Radicals rose in insurrection at Zaitshar. These movements were repressed with the utmost severity; a number of the leaders were summarily shot, and Mr Pashitch himself narrowly escaped a fate that would have brought his career to an early close, and deprived Serbia of her greatest living statesman. King Milan spent most of his time in the gambling dens haunted by the Viennese nobility, where he wantonly squandered a not inconsiderable portion of his country's meagre income, and amidst a succession of Cabinet crises, continued to play into the hands of Austria.

The Bulgarian War of 1885

In 1885, as a crowning blunder, Milan, prompted by Germany and Austria—but

against the wishes of his whole people, with whom no campaign was ever more unpopular —declared war on Bulgaria, to prevent the union of that country with Eastern Rumelia. A hastily assembled and scandalously ill-equipped Serbian army of 43,000 men, under the personal command of the King, crossed the frontier on November 16th, and advanced, knee-deep in snow, on Sofia. It was defeated on the 18th and 19th at Slivnitsa by 80,000 Bulgarians under Prince Alexander of Battenberg, was compelled to retreat, and forced to entrench at Pirot on the 27th. Austria, alarmed at the success of Russia's *protégée*, intervened, and brought about an armistice just in time to prevent the fall of Nish. The ensuing peace, which was signed at Bukharest in March 1886, left Serbia's frontiers intact, but not the reputation of her King, who had shown himself as little fitted to lead an army as he was to govern.

Queen Natalie

Milan's unfortunate subjects soon had further cause to blush for their ruler. He had married in 1875 a very beautiful and gifted daughter of the Russian Colonel

Ketchko ; conjugal relations, however, had soon become strained, for Milan was anything but a faithful husband, and as Queen Natalie's sympathies were with the pro-Russian party, the estrangement between the royal couple had gradually assumed a political aspect. In 1886, after the unfortunate war with Bulgaria, Natalie left her husband, and with her son Alexander, born in 1876, took up her abode first in Russia, and later in Germany. In 1888 Milan demanded that his son should be restored to his care, and on the Queen's refusal, the boy was seized by the police at Wiesbaden, and escorted to Belgrade. In answer to the Queen's protests, Milan gave it to be understood through his private physician, Vladan Georgevitch, that Natalie refused to spoil her good looks by giving birth to more than one offspring, and in eloquent orations to the people he announced his intention to seek another consort that would be more willing to ensure the perpetuation of the dynasty. This palace scandal, in which all the sympathies were with the Queen, Milan's shamelessly irregular life being known to all, culminated in a divorce which the Serbian Metropolitan was

compelled to grant in violation of all the laws of the Orthodox Church, and which later on was annulled. Public opinion was roused to the highest pitch, and the Progressive ministry under Garashanin resigned.

The Constitution of 1888

Milan endeavoured to retrieve his position by the enactment of a new Constitution : the ministry became responsible to the Assembly, the latter controlled the budget, and was elected by universal suffrage. Individual liberty, the liberty of the Press, and the right of association were guaranteed.

Then acting on one of those irresponsible impulses which had so often marred his rule, the young King—he was only thirty-five—suddenly decided that all the thrones in the world were not worth the gay life of Paris, which he had barely tasted twenty years before, and abdicated in favour of his son Alexander, who was twelve years of age, and during whose minority the executive power was delegated to a Regency under the leadership of Jovan Ristitch.

IX: THE REIGN OF KING ALEXANDER

The Regency

ALEXANDER'S education had been even more demoralizing than that of his father. It had been entrusted to young officers who had brought back from Paris and Saint-Cyr more vices than military knowledge, and from Vienna a gospel of firm autocracy as the only means of defeating a supposed ring of enemies in the pay of Russia. The young King was anointed in the monastery of Jitsha on June 15th, on the five hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kossovo, and a Radical Ministry was formed, in sympathy with the overwhelmingly Radical Assembly which was returned after the new elections.

In 1891 Queen Natalie returned to Belgrade, and Russian influence began once more to assert itself. Fear of a revolution and of King Milan's return led to a compromise by which in May 1891 the Queen left the

country and Milan was allowed one million francs from the civil list on condition that he should not re-enter Serbia during Alexander's minority. But these measures remained without any effect on the alarming economic situation of the country. In spite of all their promises the Radicals were powerless to bring the finances into order or to reduce taxation. The budget deficit grew apace, especially as the Government could not or would not enforce the payment of arrears from its supporters; new loans were constantly resorted to, and divisions between the Radical leaders led to frequent ministerial changes.

The Coups d'État of 1892 *and* 1893

On the death of one of the Regents, Protitch, in 1892, Ristitch foresaw that the Assembly would replace him by a Radical, and thus endanger his own position; he therefore proceeded to a *coup d'état*: without any avowed motive he dismissed the Radical Ministry presided over by Mr Pashitch, and constituted a Liberal Government. The Skupshtina was dissolved, and the Liberals attempted by every possible means to terrorize the people into electing an Assembly that would

give them its support. At Goratchitch, for instance, when the people attempted to hold a meeting, as was their legal right, they were summarily shot! The elections nevertheless returned a Radical majority. The Government refused to recognize their validity, and an insurrection was imminent, when on April 13th, 1893, Alexander, who was then sixteen years old, caused the Regents and ministers to be arrested during a public dinner, declared himself of age, deposed the Regency, dismissed the Government, and took the power into his own hands. As president of a new Radical-Progressive Ministry he selected his tutor, the moderate Radical Dokitch. These measures, which for a time gave practically unlimited power to the Radicals, were received with enthusiasm by the people and the army, but they effected no improvement in the situation. Finances remained at such a low ebb that neither the interest on the public debt nor the salaries of the State officials could be paid.

Return of Milan. Coup d'État of 1894

Alexander soon came into conflict with both the ministry and the Assembly, and

in January 1894 invoked the assistance and advice of his father, who now returned from Paris. In spite of a terrible Press campaign, Milan and Natalie, who had in the meantime become ostensibly reconciled, resumed their positions as members of the royal family, and under Milan's advice, on May 21st, Alexander abrogated the Constitution of 1888 and restored that of 1869. One result of this reactionary measure was to gag the Press, and in 1895 the crisis seemed to come to an end. Milan had again left Serbia, Queen Natalie had returned to Belgrade from Biarritz, and been received with enthusiasm. The presidency of the ministry was entrusted to Novakovitch, a Progressive who was justly respected by all; negotiations were opened with the Radicals and a project of constitution elaborated. In 1897 an intrigue of Milan brought the negotiations to naught; Novakovitch withdrew, and Milan returned and fixed himself in Belgrade. Appointed head of the army, in the reorganization of which he certainly did good work, he governed under the name of his son with a ministry of his own adherents presided by the notorious Vladan Georgevitch.

Drastic laws were passed on the liberty of the Press, the right of association, the system of election. The right to vote was withdrawn from all the thinking men or *intelligentsia* of Serbia: journalists, doctors, lawyers, professors, and officials. In July 1899 an attempt made against Milan by a Bosnian served as a pretext to strike at the Radical leaders; they were implicated in a plot concocted by *agents provocateurs*, and, although innocent, condemned by judges in Milan's pay.

The King's Marriage

In June 1900 Alexander shocked the whole of Europe by a crowning piece of folly. During the temporary absence of his father and of the Prime Minister, he suddenly, to the consternation of the people, married his former *maîtresse*, Draga Mashin, the widow of a civil engineer, a woman much older than himself, and of so impossible a reputation that the possibility, had it existed, of her bearing an heir to the throne, could not but have been revolting to the Serbian nation. Even Milan refused to condone this action. Banished from Serbia by his son, he died in Vienna in 1901 under mysterious

circumstances which suggested foul play at the hands of his former gambling associates.

Under Draga's influence, Alexander initiated a rule of almost Neronian tyranny. The Radical party were terrorized by one *coup d'état* after another; the Queen offered intolerable insults to the prominent statesmen of the Assembly, and to the officers who had formerly caroused with her in the *demi-monde* of Belgrade; she roused the whole country to a white heat of excitement by a simulated accouchement, and when this myth was exploded began to intrigue to secure the succession to her own brother, a man as objectionable and arrogant as the Queen herself; thus blunders and outrages followed each other under the most impossible couple that ever occupied a throne.

The Tragedy of June 1903

The end came on the night of June 10th, 1903; a group of Serbian officers entered the palace and murdered the King and Queen, together with Draga's brothers, the Prime Minister, the Minister of War, and Alexander's aide-de-camp. The next day the army proclaimed Peter Karageorgevitch

King of Serbia. Thus ended the Obrenovitch dynasty; its disappearance is a sad page in the history of Serbia, but the crime cannot be compared with that of 1869, when a worthy ruler was done to death by a gang of enemies of the nation. Alexander and his strange consort had ruled by terror, committed every offence, political and moral, and alienated every sympathy. A week before the murder the plot was known to more than one European court, yet none saw fit to intervene, or to give the wretched couple any warning of their impending fate; as for the Serbian people, they received the news with the utmost composure, and with a shrug of the shoulders if not a sigh of relief. The Skupshtina confirmed the election of Prince Peter to the throne five days later, and Austria and Russia, who knew the circumstances best, immediately recognized his accession. The other European Powers, including Great Britain, refused to do so until the regicides were compelled to retire into private life in 1906.

X: THE BOSNIAN AND MACEDONIAN QUESTIONS

Peter Karageorgevitch

PETER KARAGEORGEVITCH had spent a long life in exile, and was a well-known and popular figure in European diplomatic circles. On leaving the military school of Saint-Cyr, where he belonged to the famous Puebla class that has given France so many brilliant officers, he had fought with distinction in the Franco-German war of 1870–71, and been decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honour. In 1877, on the outbreak of the revolutionary movement in Bosnia, he had organized a small army and carried on for many months a desperate and romantic war against the Turks. He was further known as a man of scholarly taste and achievement, and as the translator into the Serbian language of John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Liberty*, a precious gift to his countrymen. In 1883 he had increased the prestige of his family

name by his marriage with the daughter of the Prince of Montenegro. The Serbian people had long desired a *rapprochement* with their sea-board neighbours, a step which Milan had steadily opposed, and this marriage was an earnest of the policy which Peter would pursue, should he ever be called to power. Thus, without conspiring or intriguing, he had become, since the death of his father Prince Alexander in 1885, a redoubtable pretender to the throne of Serbia.

Prince Peter was residing in Geneva when a delegation presented itself to acclaim him King of Serbia; in accepting the heavy crown that was offered him, he solemnly undertook to restore all the liberties of his people, to abide by the Constitution of 1888, and to devote himself entirely to the restoration of peace, goodwill, and economic prosperity among his people. These promises King Peter has kept, and at the same time he has done more than any other monarch to help Serbia to a clear consciousness of her legitimate aspirations, and to prepare his country for their realization.

The Annexation of Bosnia

The three years that followed his accession were a period of rest and recuperation under the wise administration of Mr Pashitch; agriculture, industry and trade were encouraged, and increased to an unprecedented extent. With the growth of trade, however, Serbia's position of complete economic dependence on the openly hostile or extortionate markets of Austria-Hungary became more and more impossible, and to obtain some relief from this thraldom she concluded in 1906 a customs treaty with Bulgaria. Austria replied by a war of tariffs, the so-called 'Pig War,' swine remaining to this day one of the most important items of Serbia's export trade. The resulting economic crisis greatly embittered the peasantry against the Dual Monarchy, and indirectly led to a *rapprochement* with Russia. Serbia, however, soon found new outlets in Egypt, Italy, and France, by way of Salonika, and was once more on the road to enhanced prosperity, when in 1908, following on the Young Turk revolution, Austria threw a bomb-shell among the European Powers by annexing Bosnia

and Herzegovina. She had administered these provinces, under the nominal rule of the Sultan, for the last thirty years, but this departure from the *status quo*, and formal annexation without previous consultation with the Powers, was a deliberate tearing up of the scrap of paper known as the Treaty of Berlin.

Serbia was in no mood to acquiesce; her strenuous protest was followed by an appeal to the Triple Entente, which had come into being in 1907, and particularly to Russia. At the same time, the Serbian army was mobilized, and every preparation made to take the field if necessary. Russia, however, while endeavouring to obtain compensation for Serbia, counselled moderation. It was obvious that Count Aehrenthal's action was endorsed by Germany, was intended as a diplomatic challenge not so much to Serbia as to Russia herself, and was the reply to the latter Power's decision to throw off German influence in favour of an understanding with France and England. It was barely three years since Russia had signed the Treaty of Portsmouth with Japan, and she had only begun to make good those faults in her mili-

tary organization which the Manchurian campaign had revealed; when in March 1909 the German Emperor stepped forward "in shining armour" to support the action of Austria, Russia and Serbia were forced to submit, and the Serbian Government was actually compelled to make an official acknowledgment to the Powers that the affairs of Bosnia concerned Austria alone.

Thus a crisis was averted for the moment, but from that day it became obvious that neither Russia nor Serbia could forgive and forget, and that the hour of reckoning was merely postponed.

Serbia's Mission and Difficulties

During the two years that followed, Serbia was confronted with the following problems:

The Jugo-Slavs, or Southern Slavs of Bosnia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, Croatia, Macedonia, and of Serbia proper, *i.e.* a population of eleven millions, were daily growing more conscious of their fundamental unity of race, language, and aspirations, and were looking to Serbia to lead them toward independence, as Piedmont had led the other Italian States in 1860.

Under the rule of the Young Turks, the condition of the Christian populations of Macedonia, consisting of Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks, had lately grown so intolerable that the three nations concerned could no longer remain passive spectators of the scandalous terrorizing, cruelty, and slaughter to which they were subjected.

Serbia's economic progress was still crippled for lack of access to the sea, and

Serbia was now faced with the avowed and deadly hostility of Austria-Hungary, and the certain prospect of war on the first favourable opportunity.

The Attitude of Austria

Not only was the 'chastizing of Serbia' openly discussed in Vienna and Budapest, but the Foreign Office in the Ballplatz was already intent upon finding or manufacturing a *casus belli*. Count Forgách, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, had been actively engaged in procuring forged documents to implicate the Serbian Government in the Serbo-Croat agitation which the Magyars had themselves fomented, and although the Friedjung trial clearly brought out Forgách's

the mountains, where they joined the bands of rival political Komitadji which infested the country. The Turkish Committees promptly replaced the emigrant Christians by thousands of Bosnian Mussulmans of the lowest order, long known as the scum of the Turkish races, and set about 'solving the Macedonian question' on their own account by the partial elimination and total disarmament of the Christian populations. The process of disarmament was accompanied by scandalous outrage, torture, and murder, on the part both of the Turkish Committees and of the Bulgar Komitadji leaders who opposed it and forbade the Bulgarian Christians of the plains to part with their weapons. In a few months the Young Turks had brought matters to a state more revolting than had ever existed under Abdul Hamid. At last the Greek and Bulgar populations of Macedonia were compelled to unite for common measures of defence (1911), and the coming together of these irreconcilable enemies sowed the first seeds of the Balkan League.

In July 1912 the troubles of Turkey, already involved in war with Italy, were increased by a fierce rising in Albania, where

the Moslem Arnauts, or landlord class, resented the methods by which the Young Turks had secured a majority in the new Parliament; a few days later the Christian population of North Albania was also in open revolt.

In the meantime Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro were known to be preparing for war, but the Turkish Government were startled to learn in September 1912 that Greece was also making ready to mobilize.

Formation of the Balkan League

For some time past Mr Venezelos had been actively engaged in promoting an *entente* between Bulgaria and Greece, while Mr Hartwig, the Russian Minister at Belgrade, had been working to bring about a Serbo-Bulgarian reconciliation; this had been so far effected that in March 1912 the two States had signed an alliance by which Bulgaria engaged to send 200,000 men to aid Serbia in the event of Austrian aggression, while Serbia bound herself to provide 100,000 men to support Bulgaria against Turkey. At the same time the two countries' 'spheres of influence' in Macedonia had become a subject of negotiation. There was mutual recognition of the rights of Serbia over the territory

extending north and west of the Shar Planina range, and of Bulgarian claims to the territory east of the River Struma. The clauses dealing with the ultimate disposal of the wide intervening region, extending north and south from Koumanovo to Monastir and the Lakes, belong to a secret treaty, the terms of which have not yet been made public, but in which Serbia claimed a very modest share of the eventual spoils of victory. In May 1912 a Greco-Bulgarian alliance was also signed, partly defensive and partly designed to preserve the peace between Christians and Moslems in the Balkans. Montenegro signed a definite alliance with Serbia in September, but her adhesion to the policy of the latter had long been assured.

Thus was completed the chain of alliances known as the Balkan League. Turkey was at war with Italy, Albania in a state of insurrection : the time was opportune to raise the standard of freedom and deliver Macedonia from the curse of Turkish rule. For Serbia a successful issue to the campaign meant the re-establishment of her political supremacy in Old Serbia and probably much further, and the possibility of cutting her way through to the Adriatic.

XI: THE FIRST BALKAN WAR

Declaration of War

THE governments of the Balkan allies now prepared to deliver to Turkey an ultimatum embodying a demand that autonomy should be granted to the European provinces under Ottoman rule; at the same time, on September 30th, they began to mobilize their forces. Turkey replied with similar measures. The Powers once again made an ineffectual attempt to intervene, and to urge patience on the Balkan League, while a joint Note was presented to Turkey inviting the immediate discussion of reforms. The Balkan Allies, however, had made up their minds not to be played with any longer; by October 10th, when the Collective Note of the Powers to Turkey was presented, events had passed beyond the control of diplomacy. On the 8th Montenegro had declared war and invaded Albania; the Allies' ultimatum was presented in the form of an Identic Note on the 13th, and on the 17th Turkey, declining

further negotiations, declared war on the Allies.

The Turkish Plan of Campaign

It was obvious, from the geographical position of the various combatants, that Greece would work her way up toward Salonika, Serbia march south into Macedonia, while Bulgaria could move both south-west toward Salonika and south-east into Thrace. Greece had assumed from the outset the command of the sea, so that if the Allies could establish themselves on the line extending from Salonika to Adrianople, the Turkish forces in Albania and Macedonia would be cut off from all reinforcements or supplies. The Turkish plan of campaign was therefore framed as follows: to wedge in a strong army between the Serbian army marching up the valley of the Morava, and the Bulgarian force which, it was presumed, would march south-west from Küstendil; to forthwith crush the Serbians, turn against and defeat the Bulgarians, and advance on Sofia with all possible speed. The threat to Sofia would recall the Bulgarian army operating in Thrace to the defence of the capital, or, if the Bul-

garians decided to sacrifice Sofia, they would find their troops between two fires. The issue hung upon the ability of the Turks to put this strategy into operation, upon the ability of Serbia, who would bear the brunt of the onslaught, to defeat it.

The Serbian Campaign

The Serbian forces totalled 258,000 men, to which should be added fifteen territorial regiments equivalent to 75,000 men. They were divided into four armies. The first (125,000), under the command of Crown Prince Alexander, entered the Turkish territory from Vrania and proceeded up the Morava valley. The second army (one Serbian and one Bulgarian division) descended by the road from Küstendil. The third army crossed the frontier at Prepovast. While these three bodies of troops converged upon Uskub, the fourth army was detailed to clear the Turks out of the Sanjak and to proceed to the assistance of Montenegro.

The third army inflicted an early defeat on a body of Turks and Albanians at Pristina, took possession of the town, and advanced to the attack of the Kachanic Pass, through

which lies the road to Uskub. In the meantime the first army, descending from Vrania, unexpectedly came into touch on the 22nd with the main body of Turkish troops to the north of Koumanovo ; the Turks held strong positions supported by powerful artillery ; on the other hand the bad condition of the roads had delayed the progress of the Serbian guns, and it fell upon the infantry to bear alone the brunt of the fighting.

The Battle of Koumanovo

This began in earnest on the following morning, when the Turks made determined efforts to turn the Serbian positions, delivered repeated attacks, and slowly drove their opponents back, with severe losses, until midday, when artillery and reinforcements, hitherto delayed by the sodden condition of the country, at last made their appearance, and steadied the broken ranks of the Serbian army. The battle continued without marked advantage on either side until dusk, when the Turks made a supreme effort to storm the Serbian positions, in the face of a hail of shot and shrapnel. Without flinching they struggled on until they reached the much-

worn Serbian lines. At this point, however, they were met with bayonets, and, as night fell, were driven back helter-skelter toward their own positions. On the wings the fighting had been of a less strenuous character, and not unfavourable to the Turks, who, in spite of enormous losses, judged that they had won the day, and telegraphed in this sense to their headquarters at Salonika, where there were scenes of wild rejoicing.

On the morning of the 24th, the Serbians were joined by two divisions of the second army with additional guns, and an artillery duel took place over a front of fourteen miles. The Turks suffered heavily, and were already demoralized when the Serbian infantry assumed the offensive. By midday the Ottoman lines were forced, and the Turks in full flight under the pursuing fire of the Serbian guns. They abandoned on their way 120 cannon, thousands of rifles, and all their stores and ammunition. Their scattered remnants rallied for a moment at Uskub, only to flee in renewed panic at the first alarm of the Serbian approach; Uskub was occupied on the 26th, and the whole of Macedonia lay open to invasion, while the Bulgarian rear

was henceforth secure from any attack or threat.

The Serbians themselves only realized later that they had successfully disposed of the most important of the Turkish armies, fought the crucial battle of the war, and ruined the Turkish plan of campaign. This is however generally acknowledged to-day. "The first Balkan war was not won and lost exclusively upon the plains of Thrace. . . . Koumanovo was the decisive battle of the campaign, and it was the great Serbian victory of that name which more than any other engagement rendered the Balkan States masters of Macedonia." [1]

"The battle which dominates this campaign is the battle of Koumanovo, the bloodiest of all, in which a Serbian army, after a heroic fight, crushed the principal Turkish army. . . . The battle of Koumanovo will remain, historically, the preponderant battle in the Allies' War of 1912; it was this Serbian victory which allowed the Bulgarian armies to conquer Thrace. . . ." [2]

[1] W. H. Crawfurd Price, *The Balkan Cockpit*, 1915.

[2] Alphonse Muzet, *Aux Pays balkaniques*, Paris, 1914. See also the articles written since 1912 by such

The Conquest of Macedonia and Albania

On evacuating Uskub the Turks retired to Kuprulu, a position of great natural strength, which they however abandoned on November 1st, falling back on Monastir. While four divisions of the first army pursued them on the road to Monastir, the fourth Serbian army occupied the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, driving the Turks over the Austrian frontier ; part of the first and second armies joined the Bulgarians in Thrace, the cavalry of the first army cleared the valley of the Vardar and joined hands with the Greeks, who had reached Salonika ; the third army occupied Kalkandele and proceeded to Kirchevo, where a strong body of Turks was defeated after heavy fighting on November 6th. Lastly two divisions marched *via* Prisrend across the snow-covered mountains of Albania, one of the most amazing military feats of the whole war, and swept down upon the coast of the Adriatic, capturing, with the

German military experts as Colonel Emanuel and Major Kutschbach, who equally assert that the campaign in the Vardar Valley decided the entire Balkan War of 1912.

help of the Montenegrins, Lyesh (Alessio) on November 18th, and Dratch (Durazzo) on the 28th. Serbia was in possession of practically the whole of Macedonia and Albania. Although none of the subsequent fighting was on the same scale as at Koumanovo, the successive steps in the occupation of Macedonia were marked by many heroic feats. Above Prilip, the birthplace of the Serbian national hero, Prince Marko, at the expense of two thousand killed and wounded, they stormed positions that all military experts have deemed impregnable; at Bitoly (Monastir), amid the rains and floods of an early winter, they waded over plains on which the water lay knee-deep, they forded breast-high, under shot and shell, broad and icy torrents in which every man who loosed his hold of his neighbour was forthwith swept away; yet they 'won across,' carried with the bayonet the guns which raked the river, and asserted themselves in the eyes of the military attachés who watched them, as 'the finest infantry in Europe.'

In the meantime the Bulgarian armies had invested (but failed to take) Adrianople, and

worked their way through Thrace to the Tchataldja lines, whence they threatened Constantinople itself. The Greek army had taken and occupied Salonika on November 8th, to the great chagrin of the Bulgarians, who had attempted by forced marches to forestall the Greeks, and who, having arrived too late, insisted on the simulacrum of a joint occupation.

Exposition of Serbian Policy

Turkey on November 12th made a request for an armistice, but would not accept the terms of the Allies, and determined to hold out on the chance of European complications turning to her advantage. Austria was already working to nullify the unexpected and startling successes of her neighbour; no sooner had the Serbian tricolour been planted at Dratch (Durazzo), than the Ballplatz had launched a demand for an independent Albania. To make the position of his country quite clear to the world, Mr Pashitch, on November 23rd, issued the following statement to the Press:

"Serbian arms have conquered far more territory than Serbia intends to retain, but

Serbian policy has established a minimum of territorial expansion which does no more than cover her co-nationals and her national necessities. For this minimum Serbia is prepared to make every sacrifice, since not to do so would be to be false to her national duty. No Serbian statesman or government dare betray the future welfare of the country by considering, for a moment even, the abandonment of this minimum. Serbia's minimum requisite to her national development is economic independence, save, possibly, in so far as regards a Customs union with her Allies—and a free and adequate passage to the Adriatic Sea on the Adriatic coast. It is essential that Serbia should possess about fifty kilometres from Alessio to Durazzo. This coastline would be joined to what was formerly Old Serbia approximately by the territory between a line from Durazzo to Ochrida Lake in the south and one from Alessio to Dyakova in the north."

The London Conference

At the end of November Austria made her attitude plain by mobilizing five army corps, a step which compelled Russia to take similar

measures, and when a suspension of hostilities was signed on December 3rd, the Albanian question appeared as the most delicate of all the problems in the new territorial settlement. In the face of Austrian intransigence, however, full justice for Serbia would have been too dearly bought at the cost of a European war, and the London Conference of December and January 1912–13, though it proved abortive, elicited on December 20th the following declaration: "The ambassadors have recommended to their governments, and the latter have accepted, the principle of Albanian autonomy, together with a provision guaranteeing to Serbia commercial access to the Adriatic. The six governments have agreed in principle on these two points." With this policy the Powers considered that Serbia should be content, but even this policy has never yet been fully carried out.

On the expiration of the armistice on February 3rd, the Turks concentrated their resistance in Thrace, and with fresh troops from Asia Minor, brought heavy pressure to bear on the Bulgarian army, which would have been compelled to loosen its grip on

Adrianople, had it not been reinforced by fifty thousand Serbian troops and the powerful Serbian siege artillery. Under the fire of these guns, Adrianople, with its great garrison and vast stores, was compelled, after an admirable defence, to surrender on March 26th. On the 31st the Porte accepted the terms offered by the Powers as a condition of their mediation with the Balkan Allies.

Autonomous Albania

The latter now proceeded to a division of the spoils, under the auspices of the Powers, whose first acts were to give the Montenegrins notice to quit Scutari, which they had stormed on April 22nd, and to improvise a new State under the name of Albania. The Albanian question has been so thoroughly discussed in the European Press, the 'Autonomous State' which was formed, and the policy which presided over its formation, have fallen into such disrepute, that this controversy need hardly be reopened here. Let us merely remind the reader that the population of Albania is composed roughly as follows: 350,000 Arnauts, or Moslem landlords, whose land is tilled by the Christian population

under a feudal tenure ; 300,000 Mirdites, who form independent tribes or clans belonging to the Roman Catholic religion, and possess no community of interests with the Arnauts ; 350,000 Toskan Albanians, who belong to the Orthodox Church, and whose sympathies are with the Greeks ; 100,000 Valachians of the Orthodox Church ; 150,000 Greeks, 250,000 Serbs, 50,000 Bulgars, 50,000 Turks, and as many Jews.

The welding of this heterogeneous mass into a separate State meant the perpetuation of the dominion of 350,000 Turks of a mediæval type over a population of more than a million Christians ; it was a blunder the stupidity of which was realized by all at the time, a blunder that was perpetrated, not for its own sake, but merely to thwart Serbia of that access to the Adriatic which had been granted in principle in December 1912, and which Austria successfully vetoed three months later. Already in March 1913, Mr Bianconi, the geographer, wrote :

"The overweening policy of Austria-Hungary must in the long run prove fatal to her ; I am firmly convinced that the task she has

set out to accomplish in this part of the Balkans will constitute, through the unceasing complications which will inevitably follow, a constant threat to European peace."[1]

[1] *La Question Albanaise*, Paris, 1913.

XII: THE SECOND BALKAN WAR

The Terms of the Secret Treaty

THE Balkan Allies had embarked upon their campaign against the Turks with the intention of expelling them from Macedonia. They had never, in their most optimistic flights of fancy, dreamt that their success would be so overwhelming that the Turks would be driven almost out of Europe and to the very gates of Constantinople. Therefore the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty had dealt exclusively with the question of Macedonia, it had not foreseen the conquest of Thrace and of Albania. A peace had now been arranged in London by the terms of which Bulgaria retained the whole of Thrace, while Serbia lost the whole of Albania. Serbia saw herself, despite her great sacrifices, destined to be the only one of the Allies to reap an inadequate harvest from the war. While she would gain a slight increase in territory in Macedonia,

both Greece and Bulgaria would emerge immeasurably stronger in territory and population. At the same time, unless she retained possession of the valley of the Vardar, her access to Salonika would be blocked not only by Greece but also by Bulgaria, and she would be more tightly hemmed in than ever before.

Serbia decided, therefore, to ask for a revision of the terms of her treaty of alliance with Bulgaria, especially as throughout the progress of the war she had given Bulgaria material assistance far beyond the terms of their alliance. She had supplied an army of 50,000 men to assist the Bulgarians before Adrianople, had in the early months of 1913 kept her whole army in the field solely in the interests of Bulgaria, and lent Bulgaria the siege artillery which had brought about the fall of Adrianople.

Bulgaria, however, refused to entertain the suggestion, and expressed her intention of adhering to the terms of the treaty; Serbia might look for compensation at the expense of some one else, but southern Macedonia, as far as Monastir and the Lakes, must be given up. As Bulgaria was also bent on

forcibly occupying Salonika, the chief 'plum' of the war, which had fallen to the Greeks, Serbia and Greece, in their common danger, arranged a defensive alliance which was signed on June 1st.

At this stage, and on the proposal of Mr Venezelos, the Emperor of Russia offered to arbitrate on the questions under discussion,[1] and to this procedure the four interested Powers assented, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro in good faith, and Bulgaria, as documents since published have amply proved, in order to gain time for a new concentration of her forces.

Bulgaria's Treachery

In the meantime, Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian troops occupied contiguous lines, and their outposts mingled freely, smoking, play-

[1] The third Article of the Secret Appendix ('*Annexe secrète*') of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance of 1912 reads as follows: "Should any difficulty arise concerning the interpretation and the fulfilment of any clause in the present Secret Appendix of the Military Convention, it shall be submitted for a final decision to Russia, as soon as one of the two contracting parties shall have declared that an understanding cannot be come to by direct negotiation."

ing cards, and whiling away the time together. On the night of June 29th, the Bulgarian preparations being complete, without any declaration of hostilities they attacked their late Allies all along their lines, or rather advanced in silence and murdered them in their sleep.[1] Secretly prompted from Vienna and from Berlin, King Ferdinand had decided to rush into war. Thus opened a fresh campaign which once more spread desolation over Macedonia and drew a toll of 40,000 lives. The events that followed surprised not only the contending nations, but all Europe.

On July 3rd and 4th the Bulgarians were utterly routed by the Greeks at Kilkich and Lahana, after fierce fighting that cost the Greeks alone 10,000 men; on the 6th they were driven in disorder out of Doiran, bereft of much of their artillery and stores. On the 9th they suffered further losses in the Strumnitsa valley, and at Demir Hissar, at the hands of a mixed body of Greek and Serbian troops.

Baffled in the field, the Bulgarians, at

[1] See Dr. Dillon's article in the *Contemporary Review* of August 1913.

Nigrita, Demir Hissar, Serres, left a track of ruin, pillage, massacre and deeds of abomination on which we will not dwell, but which has given to the expression 'Bulgarian atrocities' a new meaning, widely different from that which attached to it in the days of Mr Gladstone.

The Battle of the Bregalnitsa

Meanwhile the Bulgarians had also taken the Serbian 1st and 3rd Armies by surprise, captured Gievgeli, scattered the forces which held the bridge of Krivolak, and crossed the Vardar in large numbers. The Serbian Staff, under Voyvode Putnik, soon reacted against this disconcerting attack, and improvised a new campaign with a promptness and skill which revealed, even more than the 'First Balkan War,' the skill and talent of the Serbian higher command. The bridgehead at Krivolak was promptly retaken, and on July 1st the Serbians gave battle for the possession of the Bregalnitsa River. The opposing forces were equal in numbers, and the Bulgarians strongly entrenched, the key to their position being the lofty plateau of Ovtche Polie. Among roadless mountains

which gave little opportunity for subtle tactics, a four-days' fight consisting largely of bayonet charges, and exceeding in stubbornness and in casualties any which had taken place against the Turks, gradually resolved itself into a decisive Serbian victory. It was dearly bought, but the price was willingly paid, for Slivnitsa, of evil memory, was avenged. Although the Bulgarians fought desperately in their retreat, the Serbian army was in Kotchana on the morning of July 5th. The Bulgarians abandoned Stip (Istib) on the 8th and Radovishte on the 9th. Strenuous fighting continued for another fortnight, during which the Serbians maintained the offensive and made continuous progress, capturing on the 21st the heights of Little and Great Govedarnik.

According to the testimony of those neutral observers who were in the best position to judge, the Bulgarians were already hopelessly beaten on both the Greek and Serbian fronts when the intervention of Rumania, whose troops marched unopposed toward Sofia, reduced them to impotence, and compelled them to sign an armistice at Bukharest on the last day of July.

The Terms of Peace

By the peace that ensued, Serbia shared the Sanjak with Montenegro, and retained Macedonia north of the Ochrida-Doiran line, with the promise of a railway outlet on the Adriatic. Greece retained Salonika, and entered into an agreement allowing Serbia the free use of that port; Bulgaria gave up to Rumania a considerable slice of territory north of a line drawn from Baltchik to Turtukai, and lost Adrianople and Kirk Kilisse, which the Turks had re-entered on July 22nd.

During the following months there was keen controversy on the question whether full self-government, or a military administration, should be given to the new provinces; eventually the wise lead of Mr Pashitch was followed, and the partisans of civil rule and autonomy in local administration carried the day.

Having settled this point in a broad and generous spirit, Serbia gladly hung up her sword, and prepared for a period of peace and recuperation, of social and industrial advancement.

XIII: THE BREWING OF THE STORM

The defeat of the Sultan's forces in all parts of European Turkey had been a tremendous blow to Austria-Hungary and especially to Germany, whose officers had reorganized and trained the Turkish army, and who, for the success of her schemes of expansion in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, depended on her ascendancy in Constantinople. The defeat of Bulgaria, the Greek occupation of Salonika, and the rise in power and prestige of Serbia, the friend of Russia and the apostle of Jugo-slav or Southern Slav emancipation, constituted for the Powers north of the Danube a still greater catastrophe. The high road to Salonika, by the valleys of the Morava and the Vardar, was definitely closed to Austria, and Germany was cut off from Turkey, whose army was to act in conjunction with the German hosts in the event of a European war. Only prompt action could retrieve such

a miscarrying of the Austro-German plans, and it is not surprising to hear that already in the summer of 1913, Austria was bent on declaring war on Serbia, and endeavoured to secure the support of Italy. As this support was not forthcoming, action was deferred for the moment, and a huge Army Bill was introduced in Germany to redress the balance of power and make ready for any eventuality.

The Serajevo Assassinations

Such was the position when, on June 28th last, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Hapsburg throne, and his consort were murdered in the streets of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. "There are many mysterious features about that tragedy. His death certainly did not serve any Southern Slav interests, for, however great and dangerous his ambitions, he is known to have been quite out of sympathy with the short-sighted policy of repression which had hitherto found favour in Vienna and in Pesth, where, for various reasons, he had many enemies in extremely influential quarters. The absence of all the most elementary precautions for his safety during the visit to Serajevo, though according

to the Austrians themselves the whole of Bosnia was honeycombed with sedition, is an awkward fact which has not hitherto been explained." [1]

On the morrow of the crime the Austro-Hungarian Press started a violent campaign against Serbia, openly putting upon the Serbian Government the responsibility for the crime. It availed nothing to point out that a country still bleeding from the wounds of two desperate wars, and whose most urgent need was a period of quiet and of internal consolidation, could not have chosen so unfavourable a moment to involve itself in new difficulties with a powerful neighbour; it availed nothing to point out that the young miscreants were Austrian subjects, and that "Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Croatia are a seething pot which needs no stirring from the outside"; [2] the Viennese Press set itself deliberately to spread the idea that the outrage had been organized in and by Serbia. Although the Bosnian Serbs are always referred to in Austria by such names as 'die Bosniaken' or 'die Orthodoxen aus Bosnien,' the assassins

[1] Sir Valentine Chirol, *Serbia and the Serbs*, 1914.
[2] R. W. Seton-Watson, *The War and Democracy*, 1915.

were referred to invariably as 'Serben,' and in such a manner as to give the impression that they were Serbs from Serbia.

On July 3rd, when the remains of the Archduke and his wife were brought from Serajevo to Vienna, the Serbian flag was very properly half-masted at the Serbian Legation in Vienna; noisy demonstrations took place in front of the Legation, and the incident was referred to the next day under the heading "Provocation by the Serbian Minister."

The 'Case' against Serbia

In the meantime a 'case' against Serbia, resting upon a secret investigation in the prison of Serajevo, was in course of preparation; it had been entrusted to Austria's professional forger, Count Forgâch, who now fittingly occupied the post of permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, and who in the early days of July provided the Hungarian Korrespondenzbureau with a plentiful supply of falsehoods. On July 3rd the following communication was issued to the Press:

"The inquiries made up to the present

prove conclusively that this outrage is the work of a conspiracy. Besides the two perpetrators, a whole number of persons have been arrested, mostly young men, who are also, like the perpetrators, proved to have been employed by the Belgrade Narodna Odbrana (National Defence) in order to commit the outrage, and who were supplied in Belgrade with bombs and revolvers."

The Foreign Office, however, probably realized that zeal was outrunning discretion, for on the same date, late at night, the newspapers received the following request: "We beg the Editor not to publish the report relating to the Serajevo outrage, which appeared in our evening's bulletin."

From this moment profound silence fell upon the inquiry at Serajevo and upon the proceedings at the Foreign Office. The attempt to trace the crime to any responsible quarters in Serbia was evidently beyond the powers of even Count Forgách. Count Berchtold discontinued the usual weekly receptions at the Ballplatz; he refused to discuss the Serajevo outrage with the representatives of foreign countries, or if discussion did arise, care was taken to dispel all appre-

hension and suspicion that Austria-Hungary was meditating any serious action against Serbia. Petrograd was assured that the step to be taken at Belgrade would be of a conciliatory character; the French Ambassador was told that only such demands would be put forward as Serbia would be able to accept without difficulty. The Press campaign nevertheless continued unabated and took its tone from the utterance of the inspired *Neue Freie Presse:* "We have to settle matters with Serbia by war, . . . and if it must come to war later, then it is better to see the matter through now."

On July 20th the Serbian Minister in Vienna wrote to Mr Pashitch: "It is very difficult, almost impossible, to discover here anything positive as to the real intentions of Austria-Hungary. The *mot d'ordre* is to maintain absolute secrecy about everything that is being done. Judging by the articles in our newspapers, Belgrade is taking an optimistic view of the questions pending with Austria-Hungary. There is, however, no place for optimism. There is no doubt that Austria-Hungary is making preparations of a serious character. That which is chiefly to be feared

and is highly probable, is that Austria is preparing for war against Serbia. The general conviction that prevails here is that it would be nothing less than suicide if Austria-Hungary once more failed to take advantage of the opportunity to act against Serbia. It is believed that the two opportunities previously missed—annexation of Bosnia and the Balkan War—have been extremely harmful to Austria-Hungary. In addition to this, there is the still more deeply rooted opinion that Serbia, after her two wars, is completely exhausted, and that a war against Serbia would in fact merely mean a military expedition to be concluded by a speedy occupation. It is also believed that such a war could be brought to an end before Europe could intervene."

The Austrian Note

It was at 6 P.M. on July 23rd that the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade handed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Note embodying the Demands of Austria, and insisting on a reply within forty-eight hours.

The Serbian Government was charged with

fomenting a revolutionary propaganda having for its object the detachment of part of the territories of Austria-Hungary from the Monarchy. It was asserted, though no proof was given, and no *dossier* communicated, that the Serajevo assassinations were planned, and the murderers equipped, in Belgrade.

The following demands followed :

"The Royal Serbian Government will publish in the *Journal Officiel* of July 26th, and as an army Order, a condemnation of the anti-Austrian propaganda and of all officers or officials who have taken part in it.

"The Royal Serbian Government will undertake besides :

"(1) To suppress all publications inciting to hatred or contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the tendency of which is directed against that Power's territorial integrity.

"(2) To dissolve immediately the Narodna Odbrana and all other societies or affiliations which foster an anti-Austrian propaganda.

"(3) To eliminate without delay from the Serbian schools any members of the staffs or vehicles of instruction with anti-Austrian tendencies.

"(4) To remove from the army and the civil service a number of officers and officials guilty of anti-Austrian propaganda, whose names will be communicated by the Austrian Government.

"(5) To accept the collaboration in Serbia of agents appointed by the Austro-Hungarian Government, for the suppression of the subversive movement.

"(6) To institute a judicial inquiry with regard to the accomplices to the plot of June 28th, residing in Serbian territory; Austro-Hungarian delegates to take part in this investigation.

"(7) To arrest at once Major Tankossitch and Milan Ciganovitch, both of whom are implicated in the assassination.

"(8) To prevent the illicit trade in arms and explosives across the frontier, and to punish those who assisted the murderers to cross the frontier.

"(9) To furnish explanations regarding the hostile and unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian functionaries, at home and abroad, since the outrage of June 28th.

"(10) To notify the Austro-Hungarian Government without delay that the measures

enumerated above have been duly carried out.

"A reply is expected at the latest on Saturday, July 25th, at 6 P.M."

So secret had the contents of the Note been kept from the representatives of the Powers, except the German Ambassador Tschirschky, who was understood to have co-operated in drafting it, that when its contents were published on the 24th, all of them were dumbfounded. The French and British Ambassadors and the Russian Chargé d'Affaires held the view that the step taken by Austria-Hungary must be considered not as a note, but as an ultimatum. They expressed indignation at its form, its contents, and the time-limit, and they also declared it to be inacceptable.

It was not intended to be accepted, and all Vienna went wild with jubilation at the certainty of war, a short war and a merry one, or rather an 'execution,'[1] to be rushed to a termination before the Powers of the Entente had time to decide on a course of action; for

[1] On July 25th, in a conversation with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, Herr von Jagow said that what Vienna intended against Serbia was not a *war*, but an *execution*.

Austria-Hungary had been assured by Herr von Tschirschky that the conflict would be localized, that Germany would keep the ring and that Russia must remain passive.

It was indeed a fact that neither Serbia nor Russia wanted war, and before the expiration of the time-limit Serbia handed in a reply to the Note, in which she exceeded all expectations in the direction of conciliation.

The Serbian Government unreservedly accepted all the demands of Austria-Hungary, except Nos. 5 and 6, and promised to revise those articles of the Constitution (*e.g.* Article 22 on the liberty of the Press) which stood in the way of these demands.

With regard to Nos. 5 and 6, further explanations were requested; the participation in the inquiries and investigations of Austrian functionaries could only be accepted in so far as it should conform with international equity and with the maintenance of friendly relations as between State and State.

Furthermore, if the manner of carrying out of the different clauses enumerated above were not entirely satisfactory to Austria-Hungary, the Serbian Government was ready to refer any point either to the Hague Tribunal

or to the Powers who had taken a part in the settlement of March 31st, 1909.

Declaration of War

A conciliatory answer was neither expected nor wanted, however ; that very evening the reply was rejected, and the Austrian Minister instructed to leave Belgrade ; on the 28th Austria declared war on Serbia.

Within the next two days Austria awoke to the startling fact that Russia was beginning to move. In spite of the German Ambassador's assurances that the Tsar would not and could not fight, he had decided to intervene ! A bully likes a fight best when his opponent is much smaller than himself ; at this appearance of a full-grown adversary Vienna pulled a very long face, and on July 31st the Ballplatz suddenly consented to eliminate from the ultimatum those demands which involved a violation of the sovereignty of Serbia, to discuss certain others, and in short to reopen the whole question. It was too late. Germany, having jockeyed Austria into a position from which there was no escape, declared war on Russia the next day.

XIV: THE 'PUNITIVE EXPEDITIONS'

Early Hostilities

When on the evening of July 25th the Crown Prince Alexander, acting as Prince Regent, signed the order for mobilization, Serbia was as entirely unprepared for war in every respect save actual experience of warfare, as any country who has ever been summoned to take the field in self-defence. Little or none of the recent wastage had as yet been made good. The orders placed abroad for cannon, rifles, ammunition, clothing, and stores had not yet been carried out; heavy guns, automobiles, flying machines were lacking. During the campaign which followed, it frequently happened that a regiment went into the firing line with one rifle for every two men, those who were unarmed taking both the places and the weapons of those who fell.

The declaration of war on the 28th was

followed by a desultory bombardment of Belgrade from batteries on the opposite shore and monitors on the river. This, however, was the only action taken during the first few days, and Austria's failure to strike while Belgrade lay defenceless and open to easy occupation is significant testimony to her alarm at the European situation and anxiety to compromise.

It was impossible for the Serbian armies to line the Austro-Serbian frontier, which extends to 340 miles, especially as in summer the Save and the Drina are easily forded at numerous points. Voyvode (Field-Marshal) Putnik therefore fell back upon the traditional lines of defence, and while the Government withdrew from Belgrade to Nish, he grouped the main armies in the Shumadia on the line Palanka - Arangelovats - Lazarevats, whence they could rapidly move either north or west. Strong detachments were posted at Valyevo and Uzhitse, and outposts stationed at every important point on the frontier, after which all that the General Staff could do was to wait till the enemy's plan of invasion materialized.

The First Invasion

At the beginning of August, Belgrade, Semendria, and Gradishte were subjected to vigorous bombardment, and a number of attempts to cross the Danube were made and repulsed with heavy losses, one Austrian regiment being practically wiped out. The Serbian Staff knew, however, that several army corps were stationed in Bosnia, and refused to be misled by these feints on the Danube. Attempts followed to cross the Drina at Liubovia and Ratsha, and the Save at Shabats, and these were looked upon as more significant. Desultory fighting round places as far apart as Obrenovats and Vishegrad continued until August 12th, when the first penetration of Austrian troops into Serbia was signalled from Losnitsa. At that town and at Leshnitsa, the 13th Army Corps and two divisions of the 8th Army Corps effected a crossing, while on the same day the 4th Army Corps crossed the Save to the north of Shabats, and other troops the Drina at Zvornik and Liubovia. By the 14th, over a front of about one hundred miles,

six great columns had crossed the rivers, and were converging on Valyevo.

The great bulk of the invaders had entered by the valley of the Jadar ; the 3rd Serbian Army and part of the 2nd Army now advanced with all possible speed to meet them ; meanwhile the remainder of the 2nd Army was ordered to block the advance from Shabats. The Austrian plan was obviously to isolate and overwhelm the 2nd and 3rd Serbian Armies in the wedge of land between the Save, the Drina, and the Jadar ; this object once attained, the road to Valyevo and Kraguyevats lay open, and Serbia was at the mercy of the invader.

On the 14th the Austrians were brought to a temporary halt by the Serbian detachments retreating from Losnitsa, who dug themselves in across the Jadar valley at Jarebitsa, and gave the main armies time to hasten westward by forced marches ; but the first real shock of battle came on the 16th, when an Austrian column of close on 80,000 men, advancing from Leshnitsa to the north of the Tzer Mountains, was heavily defeated and routed at Belikamen, two regiments being annihilated. Pursuing their

advantage, the Serbians drove in a wedge between the Austrian forces advancing from Shabats and those operating south of the Tzer Mountains along the Jadar. From this moment the Shabats and the Jadar campaign became distinct operations.

At the same time, south of the Tzer, a violent and indecisive action had taken place, and the Serbians were at length compelled to evacuate Jarebitsa on finding their left wing threatened by a force advancing, in hitherto unsuspected strength, from Krupany. The retirement was completed by the morning of the 17th.

The Battle of the Jadar

On August 18th the Crown Prince, having thrown the Austrians back upon Shabats, and brought up reinforcements south of the Tzer, deployed his army on a front of thirty-five miles, extending from Leshnitsa to the neighbourhood of Liubovia. Inspired with memories of Koumanovo and Prilip, the Serbians gradually forced their way westward, along the Tzer and Iverak ranges, and down each bank of the Jadar, throwing the enemy back upon Leshnitsa and Losnitsa.

August 19th was the decisive day of the struggle; the Austrians gave way at every point; their retreat along the valleys was shelled by the Serbian guns advancing along the intervening heights, and gradually converted into a rout, in which rifle and bayonet completed the work of the guns. By the 23rd the Serbian armies, after taking quantities of prisoners and artillery, had hurled what was left of the Austrians back across the Drina. Thus ended the five days' engagement which will be known as the Battle of the Jadar.

Evacuation of Shabats

In the meantime strong Serbian forces had crossed the Dobrava Valley, and advanced on Shabats, round which the Austrians had fortified a wide circle. Violent fighting took place on the 21st and 22nd, on which day the Serbian troops worked their way round to the western approaches of the town. They tightened their cordon on the 23rd, and during the night brought up siege artillery. When the bombardment was begun on the morning of the 24th, it was discovered that the Austrians had decamped, after murdering in cold blood fifty-eight prisoners from the 13th and 14th

Serbian Regiments, whose bodies were found piled up in three rows in a private house. By 4 P.M. the Serbians had reached the banks of the Save, and the first invasion of Serbia was at an end. The Austrians' explanation of their retreat, after the 'successful accomplishment' of their incursion into the enemy's territory, on account of more important operations at other points, is still fresh in public memory.

As a result of their attempt to 'execute' Serbia, the Austrians had lost 8000 dead, 4000 prisoners, and about 30,000 wounded; 46 cannon, 30 machine guns, and 140 ammunition wagons, besides an enormous mass of stores and transport.

The Serbian troops had lost 3000 dead and 15,000 wounded.

"Toward such a population there is room for no feelings of humanity or generosity"

As for the civil population of the districts invaded, they had been treated with a disregard of every law of civilized warfare, and a fiendish refinement of cruelty and malice, probably without parallel in modern history. The instructions issued to the Austrian troops,

under the form of leaflets, began with the words : " You are going into a hostile country the population of which is animated by fanatical hatred, and in which murder is rife in all classes of society. . . . Toward such a population there is room for no feelings of humanity or generosity." The procedure adopted was, on entering any town or village, to shoot out of hand either the mayor or a number of selected inhabitants (amounting to fifty at Leshnitsa), in order to ' inspire terror '; to secure hostages among those that remained, and to take prisoners and remove to Austria the youths under military age, " in order that King Peter might remain without soldiers for some years."

At the same time, the troops were given to understand that this campaign was an *execution*, and that they might not only loot and burn and ruin, but murder, violate and torture at will, " because these people were Serbians." The pent-up hatred and natural instincts of the Magyar found expression in deeds which could not, without offence, be described here ; as a mild example we may cite the case of a man who in the village of Dvorska was tied to a mill-wheel ; knifing him as he was whirled

round was then engaged in by the soldiers as a game of skill.

Extortion of money from a woman by the threat to kill her babe was common, and generally followed by the murder of both; wanton mutilation was commoner still; all this during the invasion. The history of the Austrian retreat is probably one of the blackest chapters in the history of mankind; whole families were burnt alive, or systematically bayoneted and laid out in rows by the roadside; the treatment of the female population can only be hinted at, in their case the final act of murder must be looked on as a crowning mercy.

In the track of the army that fell back on Losnitsa followed a small group of doctors, officials and engineers, of Serbian, Dutch, and Swiss nationality, who reported circumstantially, and photographed, what they found. A day will come when the indictment thus constituted must be met by the Magyar race at the bar of public opinion.

It was not to be expected that Austria would accept as definite the blow inflicted on her military prestige at the battle of the Jadar. Having made good their losses in

men and equipment, the enemy returned to the attack in September, and made a fresh attempt to invade the Matchva district and to occupy the left bank of the Jadar.

They were brought to an early halt, and again flung back across the Drina and the Save, retaining possession only of some of the heights of the Guchevo and Boranya Mountains, with the territory to the immediate west, and of a small tract of land in the Matchva plain which was commanded by the guns of the river monitors. For six weeks they were held in these positions by the Serbian armies, who defended a line of close on a hundred miles of trenches with totally inadequate forces and supplies, and under a strain which no troops could endure for any length of time.

The Second Invasion

By the beginning of November a retirement on to a shorter and stronger line of defence became imperative, and the Staff decided to move right back to the Kolubara River. The Austrians immediately advanced in overwhelming numbers, and five columns, totalling 250 battalions of infantry, with their artillery

and cavalry, streamed into the north-western territory. After fierce fighting they gained command of the Suvobor Mountains, the key to the whole district ; this catastrophe made it impossible to hold the Kolubara line, Belgrade was evacuated, and preparations were made to abandon if need be Kraguyevats and the arsenal. By the end of November the Austrians had extended on a line reaching from Tchatchak to Belgrade, and were preparing to swing round, with the Suvobor Mountains as a pivot, on to Mladenovats to to north-east, and toward Kraguyevats to the south-east, an enveloping movement which must have ended in the capture of the whole Serbian army.

The weak resistance hitherto opposed to the Austrian invasion was not due, however, to lack of stamina or a deterioration of moral among the Serbian troops, fatigued and worn though they certainly were. Retreat was made imperative by an almost total lack of ammunition, either for rifles or for the artillery. The bulk of the Serbian field ordnance is of French manufacture, and the French were themselves too hard pressed to make regular deliveries of shells. Whole batteries of guns

were reduced to six rounds apiece, which were held in reserve against an extreme emergency. At the same time the retreat was in part deliberate and carefully planned, for when later Voyvode Putnik was asked how he had effected the crushing defeat of the Austro-Hungarian troops, he answered laconically: "All my strategy consisted in placing between the enemy's fighting line and their impedimenta, the Serbian national mud."

By the end of November new guns and large supplies of ammunition from the British ordnance factories had been landed and were being conveyed into Serbia with all possible dispatch. At some points of the line of battle the position was almost desperate, and it may not be without interest to repeat here an incident which occurred at this time and which was related to the writer by King Peter's cousin, Prince Alexis Karageorgevitch, on the occasion of the latter's recent visit to London. The aged ruler of Serbia mounted his charger and rode up to the trenches where his brave peasants crouched with bayonets fixed to empty rifles, and exclaimed: "My dear brethren, you have sworn allegiance to your country and to your King: of this latter

oath I release you. You are at liberty to return to your homes; your aged King has come to take your place, for you must be more than worn out." With these words he dashed forward, his drawn sword in his right hand, and a Browning pistol in his left. His peasants followed with a cheer, and made a bayonet charge which caused a panic in the enemy's lines.

The Austrian Debâcle

In the meantime the long-expected ammunition had arrived, and on December 3rd, to the Austrians' amazement, the whole of their front was subjected to a sudden and violent offensive. On the 4th Suvobor was stormed, the Austrian centre was pierced, and the right wing scattered in headlong flight along the road to Valyevo. By the 7th the Serbians were back on a line extending from Lazarevats to Valyevo, and thence to Uzhitse, and the enemy fleeing toward the Drina, which they crossed in disorder two days later.

The Austrian right clung to their positions for a few days to the north and west of Mladenovats, and on the 7th and 8th made

determined efforts to break through. They were repulsed with fearful losses and compelled to give ground, though they fought with the greatest obstinacy at every step of their retreat; on the 12th they were compelled to fall back upon Belgrade. The heights to the south of the capital had been fortified with extensive earthworks and gun emplacements, and formed positions of great strength, but the Austrian troops were by now too demoralized to hold them, and gave way on the 14th. They were still fleeing across the Save when on the morning of the 15th some Serbian batteries unlimbered on the surrounding heights and shelled the pontoon bridge, rendering further escape impossible.

The Austrians left behind them over 40,000 prisoners and hundreds of guns, with the transport and stores of a vast army.

So extraordinary was the Serbian rally, and so overwhelming the catastrophe that had befallen the Austrian arms, that for some days Europe refused to credit the news from Belgrade. As its full import was grasped, the Allies also realized their indebtedness to their Balkan Ally; nor, we are well aware, will it on the day of reckoning be forgotten.

PART II: NATIONAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

Vuk Karadgitch

NATIONAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

General Characteristics

THE Serbs inhabiting the present kingdom of Serbia, having mixed with the ancient indigenous population of the Balkan Peninsula, have not preserved their true national type. They have mostly brown visages and dark hair ; very rarely are blonde or other complexions to be seen. The Bosniaks, or Serbs inhabiting Bosnia, are considered to be the most typical, and to have most strongly retained the national characteristics of the pure Southern-Slavonic or Jugoslav race. The average Serb has a rather lively temperament ; he is highly sensitive and very emotional. His enthusiasm is quickly roused, but most emotions with him are, as a rule, of short duration. However, he is extremely active and sometimes persistent. Truly patriotic, he is always ready to sacrifice his life and property for national interests, which he understands particularly well, thanks to

his intimate knowledge of the ancient history of his people, transmitted to him from generation to generation through the medium of popular epic poetry composed in very simple decasyllabic blank verse—entirely Serbian in its origin. He is extremely courageous and always ready for war. Although patriarchal and conservative in everything national, he is ready and willing to accept new ideas. But he has remained behind other countries in agricultural and industrial pursuits. Very submissive in his *Zadruga*[1] and obedient to his superiors, he is often despotic when elevated to power. The history of all the Southern Slavs pictures a series of violations, depositions, political upheavals, achieved sometimes by the most cruel means and acts of treachery; all mainly due to the innate and hitherto inexpugnable faults characteristic of the race, such as jealousy and an inordinate desire for power. These faults, of

[1] The male members of a Serbian family continue to live after marriage in the paternal home. If the house is too small to accommodate the young couple, an annexe is built. The home may be frequently enlarged in this way, and as many as eighty members of a family have been known to reside together. See Introduction, p. 28.

course, have been most apparent in the nobles, and to these faults is partly due the decay of the ancient aristocracy throughout the Balkans.

Paganism and Religion

There is available but slender material concerning the pre-Christian history of the Southern-Slavonic races, and their worship of nature has not been adequately studied. Immediately after the Slavonic immigration into the Balkan Peninsula during the seventh and eighth centuries, Christianity, which was already deeply rooted in the Byzantines, easily destroyed the ancient faith. The last survivors of paganism lived in the western part of the peninsula, in the regions round the River Neretva, and these were converted to Christianity during the reign of Basil I. A number of Croatians had been converted to Christianity as early even as the seventh century, and had established an episcopate at Zagreb (Agram). In the course of some thousand years Græco-Oriental myths and legends, ancient Illyrian and Roman propaganda and Christian legends and apocryphal writings exercised so great an influence upon

the ancient religions of the Southern-Slavonic peoples that it is impossible to unravel from the tangled skein of such evidence as is available a purely Southern-Slavonic mythology.

The Gods Peroon and Volos

Of Peroon, the Russian God of Thunder, by whom the Russian pagans used to swear in their treaties and conventions concluded with the Byzantines during the tenth century, only a few insignificant traces remain. There is a village named 'Peroon' near Spalato; a small number of persons in Montenegro bear the name;[1] and it is preserved also in the name of a plant, 'Peroonika' (*iris*), which is dedicated to the god. There is hardly a cottage-garden in the Serbian villages where one does not see the iris growing by the side of the house-leek (*Tchuvar-Koutchye*). The Serbians say that the god lives still in the person of St Elias (Elijah), and Serbian peasants believe that this saint possesses the power of controlling lightning and thunder. They also believe that St Elias has a sister

[1] One of the principal characters in King Nicholas's drama *The Empress of the Balkans* is a warrior called 'Peroon.'

'Ognyena Maria' (Mary the Fiery One), who frequently acts as his counsellor.

From the Russian God of Cattle, 'Volos,' the city 'Veless' has obtained its name; also a village in the western part of Serbia, and there is a small village on the lower Danube called 'Velessnitza.' But the closest derivative appears in the Serbian word 'Vo,' or 'Voll' (in the singular), 'Volovi' (in the plural) which means 'Ox.'

The Sun God

Other phenomena of nature were also personified and venerated as gods. The Sun god, 'Daybog' (in Russian 'Daszbog,' meaning literally 'Give, O God!'), whose idols are found in the group of idols in Kief, and whose name reappears as a proper name of persons in Russia, Moldavia, and Poland, is to the Serbians the personification of sunshine, life, prosperity and, indeed, of everything good. But there have been found no remains of idols representing the god 'Daybog' among the Southern-Slavonic peoples, as with the Russians, who made figures of him in wood, with head of silver and moustache of gold.

The Veele

The Serbian legends preserve to this day interesting traces of the worship of those pagan gods, and of minor deities which still occupy a considerable place in the national superstition. The *νύμφαι* and *ποταμοί* mentioned by the Greek historian Procope, as inferior female divinities inhabiting groves, forests, fountains, rivers or lakes, seem to have been retained in the Serbian *Veela* (or *Vila*—in the singular; *Veele* or *Vile*—in the plural). There are several fountains called 'Vilin Izvor' in Montenegro (*e.g.* on Mount Kom), as also in the district of Rudnik in Serbia. During the Renaissance the Serbian poets of Ragusa and other cities of Dalmatia made frequent reference to the *nymphs*, *dryads*, and *oreads* beloved by them as 'veele.' The Serbian bards or troubadours from the early fourteenth century to our day have ever glorified and sung of the veele, describing them as very beautiful and eternally young, robed in the whitest and finest gauze, with shimmering golden hair flowing down over snow-white bosoms, and voices of a haunting sweetness. They were sometimes

armed with bows and arrows. Their melodious songs were often heard on the borders of the lakes or in the meadows hidden deep in the forests, or on high mountain-peaks beyond the clouds. They also loved to dance, and their rings are called 'Vrzino [or *Vilino*] Kollo.' In Mount Kom in Montenegro, there is one of these rings which measures about twenty yards across and is called 'Vilino Kollo.' The Treaty of Berlin mentions another situated between Vrania and Küstandil, on the old Serbo-Bulgarian frontier. When veele were dancing nobody dare disturb them, for they could be very hostile to men. Like the Greek nymphs, veele were also, at times, amicably disposed, and on occasions they assisted the heroes. They could become the sisters of men and of women, and could even marry and have offspring; nor were they by any means invulnerable. Prince Marko, the favourite hero of the Serbians, was endowed with superhuman strength by a veela who also presented him with a most wonderful charger, 'Sharatz,' which was, indeed, almost human. A veela also became his *possestrima* (Spiritual sister, or 'sister-in-God'), and when Marko was in urgent need of help, she would

descend from the clouds and assist him, though she refused to aid him if he fought duels on Sundays. On one occasion Marko all but slew the Veela Raviyoyla, who had wounded his *pobratim* (brother-in-God) Voyvode Milosh. But the veele were wise in the use of herbs, and knew the properties of every flower and berry, therefore Raviyoyla was able to heal the wounds of Milosh, and his pierced heart was "sounder than ever before." The veele also possessed the power of clairvoyance, and Prince Marko's 'sister-in-God' prophesied his death and that of Sharatz. Veele had power to control tempests and other phenomena of nature; they could change themselves into snakes or swans. When they were offended they could be very cruel; they could kill or take away the senses of any who threatened them with violence; they would lead men into deep waters or raze in a night magnificent buildings and fortresses. They believed in God and St John, and abhorred the Turk.

To veele was attributed also the power of deciding the destiny of newly born children. On the seventh night after the birth of a child the Serbian peasant woman watches carefully for the *Oossood*, or *Sudyaya*, a veela

who will pronounce the destiny of her infant, and it is the mother only who can hear the voice of the fairy.

Predestination and Immortality

The Serbians believe firmly in predestination, and they say that "there is no death without the appointed day" (*Nema smrti bez soodyena dana*). They believe universally in the immortality of the soul, of which even otherwise inanimate objects, such as forests, lakes, mountains, sometimes partake. After the death of a man, the soul delays its departure to the higher or lower spheres until the expiration of a certain period (usually forty days), during which time it floats in the air, and can perhaps enter into the body of some animal or insect.

Good and Evil Spirits

Spirits are usually good; in Montenegro the people believe that each house has its Guardian-Spirit, whom they call *syen* or *syenovik*. Such syens can enter the body of a man, a dog, a snake, or even a hen. In like manner every forest, lake, and mountain has its syen, which is called by the Turkish

word *djin*. For instance, there is a djin on the mountain Riyetchki Kom, near the northern side of the lake of Scutari, who does not allow the passers-by to touch a branch or a leaf in the perpetually green woods on the mountain side ; if any traveller should gather as much as a flower or a leaf, he is instantly pursued by a dense fog and perceives miraculous and terrifying visions in the air. The Albanians dread similar spirits of the woods in the region round Lurya, where they do not dare to touch even the dry branches of fallen firs and larches. This recalls the worship of sacred bushes common among the ancient Lithuanians.

Besides the good spirits there appear evil spirits (*byess*), demons, and devils (*dyavo*), whom the Christians considered as pagan gods, and other evil spirits (*zli doossi*) too, who exist in the bodies of dead or of living men. These last are called *vukodlaks* or *vlkodlaks* (from *vuk*, meaning 'wolf,' and *dlaka*, meaning 'hair'), and according to the popular belief, they cause solar and lunar eclipses. This recalls the old Norse belief that the sun and moon were continually pursued by hungry wolves, a similar attempt

to explain the same natural phenomena. Even to-day Serbian peasants believe that eclipses of the sun and moon are caused by their becoming the prey of a hungry dragon, who tries to swallow them. In some parts of Serbia it is generally believed that such dragons are female beings. These mischievous and very powerful creatures are credited with the destruction of cornfields and vineyards, for they are responsible for the havoc wrought by the hail-carrying clouds. When the peasants observe a partial eclipse of the moon or the sun, believing that a hailstorm is imminent, they gather in the village streets, and all—men, women, and children—beat pots and pans together, fire pistols, and ring bells in order to frighten away the threatening monster.

In Montenegro, Herzegovina, and Bocca di Cattaro the people believe that the soul of a sleeping man is wafted by the winds to the summit of a mountain, and, when a number of such have assembled, they become fierce giants who uproot trees to use as clubs and hurl rocks and stones at one another. Their hissing and groans are heard especially during the nights in spring and autumn. Those struggling crowds are not composed merely

of human souls, but include the spirits of many animals, such as oxen, dogs, and even cocks, but oxen especially join in the struggles.

Witches

Female evil spirits were generally called *veshtitse* (singular, *veshtitsa*, derived obviously from the ancient Bohemian word *ved*, which means 'to know'), and were supposed to be old women possessed by an evil spirit, irreconcilably hostile to men, to other women, and most of all to children. They corresponded more or less to the English conception of 'witches.' When an old woman went to sleep, her soul left her body and wandered about till it entered the body of a hen or, more frequently, that of a black moth. Flying about, it entered those houses where there were a number of children, for its favourite food was the heart of an infant. From time to time veshtitse met to take their supper together in the branches of some tree. An old woman having the attributes of a witch might join such meetings after having complied with the rules prescribed by the experienced veshtitse, and this was usually done by pronouncing certain

stereotyped phrases. The peasants endeavoured to discover such creatures, and, if they succeeded in finding out a witch, a jury was hastily formed and was given full power to sentence her to death. One of the most certain methods used to discover whether the object of suspicion was really a witch or not, was to throw the victim into the water, for if she floated she was surely a witch. In this case she was usually burnt to death. This test was not unknown in England.

Vampires

The belief in the existence of vampires is universal throughout the Balkans, and indeed it is not uncommon in certain parts of Western Europe. Some assert that this superstition must be connected with the belief generally held in the Orthodox Church that the bodies of those who have died while under excommunication by the Church are incorruptible, and such bodies, being taken possession of by evil spirits, appear before men in lonely places and murder them. In Montenegro vampires are called *lampirs* or *tenats*, and it is thought that they suck the blood of sleeping men, and also of cattle and other

animals, returning to their graves after their nocturnal excursions under the form of mice. In order to discover the grave where the vampire is lurking, the Montenegrins take out a black horse, without blemish, and lead it to the cemetery. The suspected corpse is dug up, pierced with stakes and burnt. The authorities, of course, are opposed to such superstitious practices, but some communities have threatened to abandon their dwellings, and thus leave whole villages deserted, unless allowed to ensure their safety in their own way. The Code of the Emperor Dushan the Powerful provides that a village in which bodies of dead persons have been exhumed and burnt shall be punished as severely as if a murder had been committed; and that a *resnik*, that is, the priest who officiates at a ceremony of that kind, shall be anathematized. Militchevitch, a famous Serbian ethnographist, relates an incident where a resnik, as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, read prayers out of the apocrypha of Peroon when an exorcism was required. The revolting custom has been completely suppressed in Serbia. In Montenegro Archbishop Peter II endeavoured to uproot it, but without entire

success. In Bosnia, Istria, and Bulgaria it is also sometimes heard of. The belief in vampires is a superstition widely spread throughout Rumania, Albania, and Greece.

Nature Worship

Even in our own day there are traces of sun and moon worship, and many Serbian and Bulgarian poems celebrate the marriage of the sun and the moon, and sing of *Danitza* (the morning star) and *Sedmoro Brayte* ('The Seven Brothers'—evidently The Pleiades). Every man has his own star, which appears in the firmament at the moment of his birth and is extinguished when he dies. Fire and lightning are also worshipped. It is a common belief that the earth rests on water, that the water reposes on a fire and that that fire again is upon another fire, which is called *Zmayevska Vatra* ('Fire of the Dragons').

Similarly the worship of animals has been preserved to our times. The Serbians consider the bear to be no less than a man who has been punished and turned into an animal. This they believe because the bear can walk upright as a man does. The Montenegrins consider the jackal (*Canis aureus*)

a semi-human being, because its howls at night sound like the wails of a child. The roedeer (*Capreolus caprea*) is supposed to be guarded by veele, that is why it so often escapes the hunter. In some parts of Serbia and throughout Montenegro it is a sin to kill a fox, or a bee.

The worship of certain snakes is common throughout the Balkans. In Montenegro the people believe that a black snake lives in a hole under every house, and if anybody should kill it, the head of the house is sure to die. Certain water-snakes with fiery heads were also considered of the same importance as the evil dragons (or hydra) who, at one time, threatened ships sailing on the Lake of Scutari. One of these hydras is still supposed to live in the Lake of Rikavats, in the deserted mountains of Eastern Montenegro, from the bottom of which the hidden monster rises from time to time, and returns to the light of day heralded by great peals of thunder and flashes of lightning.

But the Southern Slavs do not represent the dragon as the Hellenes did, that is to say as a monster in the form of a huge lizard or serpent, with crested head, wings and great

strong claws, for they know this outward form is merely used as a misleading mask. In his true character a dragon is a handsome youth, possessing superhuman strength and courage, and he is usually represented as in love with some beautiful princess or empress.

Enchanters

Among celebrants of the various pagan rites, there is mention of *tcharobnitsi* (enchanters), who are known to have lived also in Russia, where, during the eleventh century, they sapped the new Christianity. The Slavonic translation of the Gospel recognized by the Church in the ninth century applies the name 'tcharobnitsi' to the three Holy Kings.

To this same category belong the *resnitsi* who, as is apparent in the Emperor Dushan's Code referred to previously, used to burn the bodies of the dead. *Resnik*, which appears as a proper name in Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia, means, according to all evidence, 'the one who is searching for truth.'

Sacrificial Rites

From translations of the Greek legends of the saints, the exact terminology of the

sacrificial ceremonies and the places where they were performed is well known. Procopius mentions oxen as the animals generally offered for sacrifice, but we find that calves, goats, and sheep, in addition to oxen, were used by the Polapic Slavs and Lithuanians, and that, according to Byzantine authorities, the Russians used even birds as well. In Montenegro, on the occasion of raising a new building, a ram or a cock is usually slaughtered in order that a corner-stone may be besprinkled with its blood; and, at the ceremony of inaugurating a new fountain, a goat is killed. Tradition tells how Prince Ivan Tzrnoyevitch once shot in front of a cavern an uncommonly big wild goat that, being quite wet, shook water from its coat so that instantly a river began to flow thence. This stream is called to this day the River of Tzrnoyevitch. The story reminds one of the goats' horns and bodies of goats which are seen on the altar dedicated to the Illyrian god, Bind, near a fountain in the province of Yapod.

It is a fact that Russians and Polapic Slavs used to offer human sacrifices. Mention of such sacrifices among the Southern Slavs is found only in the cycle of myths relating to

certain buildings, which, it was superstitiously believed, could be completed only if a living human being were immured in them. Such legends exist among the Serbians and Montenegrins concerning the building of the fortress Skadar (Scutari) and the bridge near Vishegrad; with the Bulgarians in reference to building the fort Lidga-Hyssar, near Plovdiv, and the *Kadi-Köpri* (Turkish for 'the bridge of the judge') on the River Struma; and again among modern Greeks in their history of the bridge on the River Arta, and in the Rumanian tradition of the church 'Curtea de Ardyesh.' It seems likely that certain enigmatic bas-reliefs, representing human faces with just the eyes, nose and mouth, which are found concealed under the cemented surface of the walls of old buildings, have some connexion with the sacrificial practice referred to. There are three such heads in the fortress of Prince Dyouragy Brankovitch at Smederevo (Semendria), not far from Belgrade, on the inner side of the middle donjon fronting the Danube, and two others in the monastery Rila on the exterior wall close to the Doupitchka Kapiya.

Funeral Customs

During the siege of Constantinople in the year 626, the Southern Slavs burnt the bodies of their dead. The Russians did the same during the battles near Silistria, 971, and subsequently commemorative services were held in all parts of Russia, and the ashes of the dead were buried.

The Slavs of north Russia used to keep the ashes of the dead in a small vessel, which they would place on a pillar by the side of a public road; that custom persisted with the Vyatitchs of southern Russia as late as 1100.

These funeral customs have been retained longest by the Lithuanians; the last recorded instance of a pagan burial was when Keystut, brother of the Grand Duke Olgerd, was interred in the year 1382, that is to say, he was burnt together with his horses and arms, falcons and hounds.

There are in existence upright stones, mostly heavy slabs, many of them broken, or square blocks and even columns, which were called in the Middle Ages *kami*, or *bileg*, and now *stetyak* or *mramor*. Such stones are to be found in large numbers close

together ; for example, there are over 6000 in the province of Vlassenitza, and some 22,000 in the whole of Herzegovina ; some can be seen also in Dalmatia, for instance, in Kanovli, and in Montenego, at Nikshitch ; in Serbia, however, they are found only in Podrigne. These stones are usually decorated with figures, which appear to be primitive imitations of the work of Roman sculptors : arcades on columns, plant designs, trees, swords and shields, figures of warriors carrying their bows, horsemen, deer, bears, wild boars, and falcons ; there are also oblong representations of male and female figures dancing together and playing games.

The symbol of the Cross indicates the advent of Christianity. Inscriptions appear only after the eleventh century. But many tombstones plainly had their origin in the early Middle Ages. Some tombs, situated far from villages, are described by a man's personal name in the chronicles relating to the demarcations of territories—for example, Bolestino Groblye (the burial-ground of Bolestino) near Ipek ; Druzetin Grob (the tomb of Druzet). In Konavla, near Ragusa, there was in the year 1420 a certain point

where important cross-roads met, known as 'Obugonov Grob.' Even in our day there is at that spot a tombstone without inscription, called 'Obugagn Grob.' It is the grave of the Governor Obuganitch, a descendant of the family of Lyubibratitch, famous in the fourteenth century.

Classic and Mediæval Influence

When paganism had disappeared, the Southern-Slavonic legends received many elements from the Greeks and Romans. There are references to the Emperors Trajan and Diocletian as well as to mythical personages. In the Balkans, Trajan is often confused with the Greek king Midas. In the year 1433 the Chevalier Bertrandon de la Broquière heard from the Greeks at Trajanople that this city had been built by the Emperor Trajan, who had goat's ears. The historian Tzetzes also mentions that emperor's goat's ears (ὦτια τράγου). In Serbian legends the Emperor Trajan seems also to be confused with Dædalus, for he is given war-wings in addition to the ears.

To the cycle of mediæval myths we owe also the *djins* (giants) who dwelt in caverns, and

who are known by the Turkish name *div*—originally Persian. Notable of the *divs* were those having only one eye—who may be called a variety of cyclops—mentioned also in Bulgarian, Croatian, and Slovenian mythology. On the shores of the River Moratcha, in Montenegro, there is a meadow called 'Psoglavlya Livada' with a cavern in which such creatures are said to have lived at our time.

The Spread of Christianity

When the pagan Slavs occupied the Roman provinces, the Christian region was limited to parts of the Byzantine provinces. In Dalmatia after the fall of Salona, the archbishopric of Salona was transferred to Spalato (Splyet), but in the papal bulls of the ninth century it continued always to be styled *Salonitana ecclesia*, and it claimed jurisdiction over the entire lands as far as the Danube.

According to Constantine Porphyrogenete, the Serbians adopted the Christian faith at two different periods, first during the reign of the Emperor Heraclius, who had requested the Pope to send a number of priests to convert

those peoples to the Christian faith. It is well known, however, that the Slavs in Dalmatia even during the reign of Pope John IV (640–642) remained pagans. No doubt Christianity spread gradually from the Roman cities of Dalmatia to the various Slav provinces. The Croatians already belonged to the Roman Church at the time when its priests were converting the Serbians to Christianity between the years 642 and 731, *i.e.* after the death of Pope John IV and before Leon of Isauria had broken off his relations with Rome.

The second conversion of those of the Southern Slavs who had remained pagans was effected, about 879, by the Emperor Basil I.

At first the Christian faith spread amongst the Southern Slavs only superficially, because the people could not understand Latin prayers and ecclesiastical books. It took root much more firmly and rapidly when the ancient Slavonic language was used in the church services.

Owing to the differences arising over icons and the form their worship should take, enthusiasm for the conversion of the pagans

by the Latin Church considerably lessened. In the Byzantine provinces, however, there was no need for any special effort to evangelize the people, for the Slavs came in constant contact with the Greek Christians, whose beliefs they adopted spontaneously.

From the Slavonic appellations of places appearing in certain official lists, one can see that new episcopates were established exclusively for the Slavs by the Greek Church. The bishops conducted their services in Greek, but the priests and monks, who were born Slavs, preached and instructed the people in their own languages. Thus they prepared the ground for the great Slav apostles.

The Slav apostles of Salonika, Cyrillus and his elder brother Methodius, were very learned men and philosophers. The principal of the two, Cyrillus, was a priest and the librarian of the Patriarchate; in addition he was a professor of philosophy in the University of the Imperial Palace at Constantinople, and he was much esteemed on account of his ecclesiastical erudition. Their great work began in 862 with the mission to the Emperor Michel III, with which the Moravian

Princes Rastislav and Svetopluk entrusted them.

The Moravians were already converted to Christianity, but they wished to have teachers among them acquainted with the Slav language. Before the brothers started on their journey, Cyrillus composed the Slav alphabet and translated the Gospel.

Thus the Serbians obtained these Holy Books written in a language familiar to them, and the doctrines of the great Master gradually, but steadily, ousted the old, primitive religion which had taken the form of pure Naturalism. But the worship of nature could not completely disappear, and has not, even to our day, vanished from the popular creed of the Balkans. The folk-lore of those nations embodies an abundance of religious and superstitious sentiment and rites handed down from pre-Christian times, for after many years' struggle paganism was only partially abolished by the ritual of the Latin and afterwards of the Greek Christian Church, to which all Serbians, including the natives of Montenegro, Macedonia, and parts of Bosnia, belong.

Superstition

The foundations of the Christian faith were never properly laid in the Balkans, owing to the lack of cultured priests, and this reason, and the fact that the people love to cling to their old traditions, probably accounts for religion never having taken a very deep hold on them. Even to this day superstition is often stronger than religion, or sometimes replaces it altogether. The whole daily life of the Southern Slav is interwoven with all kinds of superstition. He is superstitious about the manner in which he rises in the morning and as to what he sees first; for instance, if he sees a monk, he is sure to have an unfortunate day; when he builds a house, a 'lucky spot' must be found for its foundation. At night he is superstitious about the way he lies down; he listens to hear if the cocks crow in time, and if the dogs bark much, and how they are barking. He pays great attention to the moment when thunder is first heard, what kind of rain falls, how the stars shine—whether or not they shine at all, and looks anxiously to see if the moon has a halo, and if the sun shines through a cloud.

All these things are portents and omens to his mind, and they play a considerable part in all his actions. When he intends to join a hunting expedition, for example, he decides from them whether there will be game or not ; he believes that he is sure to shoot something if his wife, or sister (or any other good-natured person) jumps over his gun before he calls up his dogs. Especially there are numberless superstitions connected with husbandry, for some of which fairly plausible explanations could be given ; for others, however, explanations are hopelessly unavailing, and their origin is totally forgotten. Nevertheless, all superstitions are zealously observed because, the people say, "it is well to do so," or "our ancestors always did so and were happy, why should we not do the same ?"

The planting of fruit-trees and the growing of fruit must be aided by charms, and numerous feasts are organized to secure a fruitful year, or to prevent floods, hail, drought, frost, and other disasters. But undoubtedly the greatest number of superstitions exist regarding the daily customs, and especially regarding birth, marriage, and death. Charms

are used to discover a future bridegroom or bride ; to make a young man fall in love with a maid or *vice versâ ;* also, if it seems desirable, to make them hate each other. Sorcery is resorted to to ensure the fulfilment of the bride's wishes with regard to children ; their number and sex are decided upon, their health is ensured in advance, favourable conditions are arranged for their appearance. Death can come, it is believed, only when the Archangel Michael removes a soul from its body, and that can only happen on the appointed day.

As the Serbians are the most representative of the Balkan Slavs, we shall consider a few of their customs in order to show how intimately superstition blends with the true spirit of Christianity in some of their religious observances.

Marriage

When a child is born in a Serbian family, the friends congratulate the parents and wish for them : " that they may live to see the green wreaths," which means living to see their child married. Marriages are most frequent in autumn, especially toward Christ-

mas, and more rare in summer. When parents intend to find a bridegroom for their daughter or a bride for their son, they generally consider the question thoroughly for a whole year beforehand. They take their daughter or son to various social gatherings, where they may meet one suited to become their husband or wife. When a daughter is informed of her parents' decision she must hasten her preparations : she must see that the *bochtchaluks* [1] (wedding presents), which she has to distribute among the wedding guests (*svati* or *svatovi*) be finished soon. These presents are articles mostly made by her own hands, such as socks, stockings, shirts, towels, and rugs. Usually the house is put into good order and perhaps enlarged, and when all the preparations are ready the rumour of her approaching marriage is allowed to spread through the village. As marriages are usually settled by the parents, love-matches, unfortunately, are rare, and elopements are regarded as extraordinary occurrences. There are, however, occasionally cases when young people are not docile to the will of their parents. If a girl has fallen in love with a young man, she may have recourse,

[1] A Serbian word of Turkish origin.

besides usual ways and methods, to professional enchantresses. Among the devices recommended by these friends of lovers are the following : The maiden looks through the muzzle of a roast sucking-pig (which has been killed for the Christmas festivities) at her beloved, whereupon he is sure to fall madly in love with her ; her lover is bound to die of love for her if she looks at him through a hole made in a cherry or certain other fruit ; she is equally sure to gain his affection if she can succeed in finding the trace of his right footprint and turns the earth under it. These and many other kinds of sorcery are usually practised on or about St George's Day (23rd of April O.S.).

Young men, too, have recourse on occasion to witchcraft when they desire the love of some obdurate maiden. For instance, if at midnight on a certain Friday the young man goes to the courtyard of the dwelling of the lady of his heart and there shakes a tree three times, uttering as many times her Christian name, she is absolutely certain to answer his call and to reciprocate his love. Another equally infallible method is for him to catch a certain fish and to let it die near his heart ;

then to roast its flesh until it is burnt to a cinder, then to pound this, and to place the powder secretly in water or some other beverage. If the girl can be induced to taste of it, she is as a matter of course constrained to love him. These expedients recall the famous exploit of the French troubadour Pierre Vidal, undertaken to win the love of his beautiful patroness Donna Azalais de Baux. A magical recipe for success in love, taken from an Arabic monument, was given to the poet by Hugues de Baux, a mischievous young knight and brother-in-law of the fair Donna Azalais ; the credulous Vidal was induced to ride on a pig one moonlight night three times round the castle of his lady-love, all unconscious that his waggish friend had brought all the inmates to a terrace to witness his ridiculous exhibition.

Marriage Negotiations

When parents have chosen their son's bride they send to her parents a fully qualified delegate (*navodagjya*) to inquire whether or not they would consent to give their daughter to the young man. As marriages are rarely concluded without the aid of these delegates

there are numerous persons who make it their regular profession to negotiate marriages, and they receive a sum of money when their offices are successful. In addition to this fee the navodagjya receives from the future bride at least one pair of socks. If the father of the girl does not favour the proposal, he generally avoids giving a decisive reply, but finds some pretext, stating, for example, that his daughter is still too young, or that she is not quite ready with her preparations for marriage ; but if the young man appears to be eligible and the father is willing to give his consent, he generally answers that he would like to see his daughter married to such an excellent man, provided the couple be fond of each other. Then a meeting is arranged, although in fact this is merely a matter of form, since the final decision must come from the parents, irrespective of the mutual feelings of the prospective husband and wife. The parents ask the young people whether they like one another ; usually an affirmative answer is given, whereupon all present embrace each other, and presents are exchanged, both between the parents and between the future husband and bride. This event is often

celebrated by the firing of pistols and guns, in order to make it known all over the village that marriage festivities are soon to follow.

Soon after the ceremony, which may be called a preliminary betrothal, the parents of the bridegroom, together with the young man and a few intimate friends, pay an official visit to the house of the bride. The visit usually takes place in the evening, and, after the bridegroom has given the bride a ring, festivities begin and last until the next morning. A few days later the bride and the bridegroom go to church, accompanied by a few friends, and the priest asks them some stereotyped questions, such as: "Do you wish to marry of your own free will?" to which they are, so to speak, compelled to answer "Yes."

The Wedding Procession

A week before the wedding-day both families prepare their houses for numerous guests, whom they will entertain most hospitably for several days. Until very recent times, if the bride lived in some distant village the wedding procession had to travel

for several days to fetch her, and, in the absence of good roads for carriages, the entire party had to ride on horseback. The wedding party includes the *dever*[1] (that is, leader of the bride), who remains in constant attendance upon the bride throughout the ceremonies, being, in a sense, her guardian; the *koom* (principal witness, who in due course becomes a sort of sponsor or godfather to the children); and the *stari-svat*, who is the second witness of the wedding ceremony. Throughout the wedding ceremonies the koom has to stand behind the bridegroom and the stari-svat behind the bride. The stari-svat is also a kind of master of the ceremonies on the wedding-day; he keeps order among the guests and presides at the nuptial banquets. With the dever come also his parents, and the koom and stari-svat must bring one servant each, to attend them during the ceremony. These two witnesses must provide themselves with two large wax candles, generally adorned with transparent silk lace

[1] This personage is usually a brother or very intimate friend of the bridegroom. He corresponds somewhat to the 'best man' at an English wedding, but his functions are more important, as will be seen.

and flowers, which they must present to the bride in addition to many other gifts.

Before the procession sets out, the young people fire pistols, sing, and dance, whilst the elders sit and take refreshment. The appearance of the bridegroom in his wedding garments, and wearing flowers in his hat, is the signal for the traditional nuptial songs from a chorus of girls. When the carriages are ready to start they sing the following :

A falcon flew from the castle
Bearing a letter under its wing,
Drops the letter on the father's knee :
See ! Father ! The letter tells thee
That thy son will travel far,
Beyond many running rivers,
Through many verdant forests,
Till he brings thee a daughter [-in-law].

The *Tzigany* (Gipsy) band begins its joyful melodies ; the bridegroom, the standard-bearer, and other young people mount their horses, all gaily bedecked with flowers, and the procession starts for the bride's house, its members riding, generally, two and two, firing pistols and singing. The procession is always led by a frolicsome youth who carries a *tchoutoura* (a flat, wooden vessel) containing red wine. It is his duty to offer this to every

person the wedding party may meet on the road, and he is privileged to make, during the wedding festival, jokes and witticisms at the expense of everybody. He enjoys the licence of a court jester for that day, and nobody must resent his witticisms, though they be, at times, indelicate and coarse.

A few steps behind the tchoutoura-bearer ride the *voyvode* (general, or leader), whose office it is to support the former in his sallies, and the standard-bearer, who carries the national flag ; after them, in a carriage profusely decorated with flowers, ride the bridesmaids, who are selected from among the relatives of the bridegroom. With other presents the maidens carry the wedding dress and flowers which the bridegroom's father has bought for his future daughter-in-law. Immediately following the bridesmaids rides the bridegroom between the koom and the stari-svat. Then come other relatives and guests, two and two in procession. At times these wedding processions offer a very impressive sight.

The Arrival

When the wedding procession approaches the house of the bride, its arrival is announced by the firing of pistols and guns, whereupon a number of girls appear and sing various songs expressive of sorrow at the bride's departure from her old home. In some parts of Serbia still survives a strange old custom ; the bride's father requires that certain conditions be fulfilled before the gates of the courtyard are opened for the procession. For example, he sends a good wrestler to challenge any or every man of the bridegroom's party, and one of the wedding guests must overpower the challenger before the gates are opened. Of course, the wrestling bout is not serious, as a rule. Another condition, obtaining in other parts, is that the new-comers are not to be admitted before one of them, by firing his pistol, has destroyed a pot or other terra-cotta vessel fastened at the top of the chimney.

When such, or other, conditions have been successfully negotiated, the wedding party is admitted to the house and led to tables loaded with roast lamb or pork, cakes, fruit, wine, and brandy. The bride's father places

the father of the bridegroom in the seat of honour, and immediately next to him the stari-svat, then the koom and then the bridegroom. When the guests are seated, a large flat cake (*pogatcha*) is placed before the bridegroom's father, and he lays upon it some gold coins ; it may be a whole chain made of golden ducats, which the bride is to wear later round her neck. His example is followed immediately by the stari-svat, the koom, and all the other guests. Finally the bride's father brings the dowry which he has determined to give to his daughter and lays it on the cake. All the money thus collected is handed over to the stari-svat, who will give it in due course to the bride. Next the bridesmaids take the wedding dress to the bride's apartment, where they adorn her with great care and ceremony. Her toilet finished, one of her brothers, or, in the absence of a brother, one of her nearest male relatives, takes her by the hand and leads her to the assembled family and friends. The moment she appears, the wedding guests greet her with a lively fire from their pistols, and the bridesmaids conduct her to the bridegroom, to whom she presents a wreath of flowers.

She is then led to the stari-svat and the koom, whose hands she kisses. This ordeal concluded, she goes into the house, where, in front of the hearth, sit her parents on low wooden chairs. There she prostrates herself, kissing the floor in front of the fire. This is obviously a relic of fire-worship ; now, however, symbolical of the veneration of the centre of family life. When she rises, the maiden kisses the hands of her father and mother, who, embracing her, give her their blessing. Now her brother, or relative—as the case may be—escorts her back to the bridegroom's party and there delivers her formally to the dever, who from that moment takes charge of her, in the first place presenting to her the gifts he has brought.

The Return from Church

After they have feasted the guests mount their horses and, firing tirelessly their pistols, set out with the bride for the nearest church. When the religious ceremony is over the wedding party returns to the bridegroom's home, and the bride has to alight from her horse (or carriage) upon a sack of oats. While the others enter the courtyard through

the principal gate, the bride usually selects some other entrance, for she fears lest she may be bewitched. Immediately she enters, the members of the bridegroom's family bring to her a vessel filled with various kinds of corn, which she pours out on the ground 'in order that the year may be fruitful.' Next they bring her a male child whom she kisses and raises aloft three times. She then passes into the house holding under her arms loaves of bread, and in her hands bottles of red wine—emblems of wealth and prosperity.

Although the wedding guests have been well feasted at the bride's house, the journey has renewed their appetites, therefore they seat themselves at tables in the same order as we have already seen, and are regaled with a grand banquet. Throughout the meal, as at the previous one, the voyvodes and the tchoutoura-bearer poke fun and satire at the expense of everybody. These mirthful effusions are, as we have already said, not always in very good taste, but no one takes offence, and everybody laughs heartily, provided there be wit in the jokes. After this feast, during which the young people perform the national dances (*kollo*) and sing the traditional wedding

songs, the dever brings the bride to the threshold of her apartment (*vayat*) and delivers her to the koom, who, in his turn, places her hand in that of the bridegroom and leaves them alone. The guests, however, often remain in the house until dawn, drinking and singing.

The Slava (or Krsno Ime)

This custom is considered to be a survival of the times when the Serbians were first converted to Christianity. Every Serbian family has one day in the year, known as *slava*, generally some saint's day, when there are performed certain ceremonies partly of a religious and partly of a social character. The saint whom the head of the family celebrates as his patron, or tutelary saint, is also celebrated by his children and their descendants.

A few days before the celebration the priest comes to the house of every *svetchar*—the man who as the chief of the family celebrates the saint—in order to bless the water which has been prepared beforehand for that purpose in a special vessel; after this he besprinkles the heads of all the members of the family with the holy water, into which he has dipped a small sprig of basil. Then

he passes from room to room performing the same ceremony in each.

In order to please their tutelary saint, all the members of the family fast for at least a week before the feast. On the eve of the saint's day a taper is lit before the saint's image, and remains burning for two days. One or two days before the festival the women prepare a *kolatch* (a special cake made of wheat-flour) which measures about fifteen inches in diameter, and is about three inches thick. Its surface is marked with a cross, which divides it into quarters, each quarter bearing a shield with the letters I.N.R.I. In the centre there is a circle in which is a *poskurnik* (monogram of these initials). Besides the kolatch, another cake of white wheat well boiled and mixed with powdered sugar, chopped nuts, and almonds, is made. This is called *kolyivo* (literally 'something which has been killed with the knife'). This is obviously a relic of the pagan times when kolyivo was the name given to animals sacrificed on the altar. When the Serbians were converted to the Christian faith, they were told that the Christian God and His saints did not call for

animal, and still less for human sacrifice, and that boiled wheat might serve as a substitute. And it is interesting to find that kolyivo is prepared only for those saints whom the people believe to be dead, and not for those who are believed to be still living, such as St Elias (Elijah), the patron saint of Thunder, or the 'Thunderer,' the Archangel Michael and certain others, for it is distinctly a symbolic offering for the dead.

The Slava Eve Reception

On the eve of the slava day enough food is prepared to last for two following days, and toward sunset, all the tables are well loaded with refreshments in readiness for the arrival of numerous guests. Friends and relations are invited to come by a messenger especially sent out from the house. There are several stereotyped forms of this invitation, one of which is the following: "My father (or my uncle, as the case may be) has sent me to bring you his greetings and to invite you to our house this evening to drink a glass of brandy. We wish to share with you the blessings bestowed upon us by God and our patron-saint. We entreat you to come!" At these words

the messenger hands to the invited guest a tchoutoura filled with red wine and decorated with flowers, from which the guest is obliged to take a sip. He makes the sign of the Cross, and says: "I thank you, and may your Slava be a happy and prosperous one!" Then after tasting the wine, he continues: "We will do our best to come. It is simple to comply with your wish, since we are invited to share such an honour." He invariably pronounces these words whether he really intends to accept the invitation or not.

In the meantime, while the messenger was away inviting guests, the women of the household have been making all the preparations necessary for their reception. Each guest, as he reaches the threshold exclaims: "O master of the house, art thou willing to receive guests?" Hearing this the Svetchar rushes to meet the guest and greets him in these words: "Certainly I am, and may there be many more good guests such as thou art!" Then the guest enters, embraces the Svetchar and says: "I wish thee a most pleasant evening and a happy Slava!" And then as a matter of course the host answers: "I thank thee, and welcome thee to my house!"

In the same manner the other guests are greeted. When they have all arrived, the host invites them to wash their hands—for no Serbian peasant would ever sit down to take food without first doing so. Then the host shows to each one his place at the table, always strictly observing precedence due to seniority.

The girls of the house first pass round brandy to the assembled guests ; this, at least in the winter, has generally been warmed, and honey or sugar has been added. While the brandy is being served all the guests stand, and in silence wait reverently for the ceremonies of the Slava to begin.

The host places in the middle of the table a large wax candle, which he does not light until he has made the sign of the Cross three times. Next he takes an earthen vessel containing a few embers, places in it a few small pieces of incense and then lets the fragrance ascend to the icon, which is, according to custom, occupying the place of honour in the room, then still holding the censer he stops for a few moments before each guest. That ceremony being ended, and if there be no priest present, the host himself invites his guests to engage in prayer. A great many

Serbian peasants are gifted with the power of offering extempore prayers and they are always in request at these ceremonies. The host passes the censer to his wife, whose duty it is to see that the fumes of the incense reach into every part of the house. Next the host breaks silence with the following prayer: "Let us pray, O brethren, most reverently to the Almighty Lord, our God, and to the Holy Trinity! O Lord, Thou omnipotent and gracious Creator of Heaven and Earth, deliver us, we pray Thee, from all unforeseen evil! O St George! [here he adds the name of the saint whose festival they are celebrating], our holy patron-saint, protect us and plead for us with the Lord, our God, we here gathered together do pray Thee. Ye Holy Apostles, ye, the four Evangelists and pillars upon whom rest the Heavens and the Earth, we, being sinners, do conjure you to intercede for us," and so on. When his prayer is finished, the guests make the sign of the Cross several times and then supper begins.

Slava Toasts

During the first two or three courses, the guests continue to drink brandy, and wine

is not served until they have partaken of meat. At the drinking of the first glass of wine the oldest guest or whoever enjoys the highest dignity of position (generally it is the village priest or the mayor) proposes the first toast, of which—as well as of all the subsequent ones—it may be said that tradition has ordered the exact programme to be followed in all these proceedings, and even prescribed the very words to be used. In some parts of Serbia the host himself proposes the first toast to the most distinguished of his guests, addressing him with: "I beg to thank you, as well as all your brethren, for the honour which you graciously show me in coming to my Slava! Let us drink the first glass to the glory of the gracious God! Where wine is drunk in His name, may prosperity always be!" The principal guest accepts the toast, makes the sign of the Cross and answers in such words as the following: "I thank you, most kind and hospitable host! May your Slava bring you prosperity, let us drink this second glass 'for the better hour.'" The third toast is generally "To the glory of the Holy Trinity!"

In some parts of Serbia there are commonly seven or even more toasts to be drunk, but this custom shows, fortunately, a tendency to disappear.

The Ceremony at Church

Next morning all the members of the family rise very early in order to restore order in the house, and the Svetchar goes to the nearest church, taking with him the kolyivo, the kolatch, some wine, incense, and a wax candle. All these things he places in front of the altar, where they must remain during the morning service, after which the officiating priest cuts the Slava cake from underneath so that his cuts correspond with the lines of the cross shown on the upper surface. Then he breaks the cake and turns it in a circle with the help of the Svetchar, while they pronounce certain prayers together. This ceremony ended, the host takes one half of the cake home and leaves the other half to the priest. If it happens that the church is far away, and time does not allow the host to absent himself long from home, the Slava cake may be cut in halves by him in his own house with the help of his male guests, chanting all the while

certain formal prayers: and standing in a circle they hold the cake so that a thumb of each guest should be placed on the top of the cake, whilst they each support it with four fingers.

The Slava Feast

Toward noon, a few minutes before the sun reaches its zenith, a part of the Slava cake is placed upon the table together with a lighted wax candle. To this midday meal many more guests are usually invited than had attended the supper on the previous evening; furthermore, on this day even a stranger—whatever his religion may be—has the right to enter the house and to claim hospitality. For instance, the Royal Prince Marko had many friends amongst the Turks, and they would invariably come to him as guests on his Slava day. All the guests rise together, cross themselves with great reverence, and, in perfect silence, with glasses filled, they await the address to be made by the Svetchar. Again three, or perhaps more, toasts are proposed and accepted, and, of course, as many times are the glasses again emptied and re-filled before the 'midday' meal is even

begun. Eating and drinking, in all cases, "to the glory of God, the Holy Trinity, the Holy Slava" and so forth, continue till late at night, when the guests remember that it is time to go home. Many, however, remain in the house all night and for the next day. Some devotees of good wine used actually to remain, on occasions, for three whole consecutive days and nights. This very extreme devotion to the saints has been practised more especially at Nish, and in that neighbourhood, and has furnished the celebrated novelist Stefan Strematz with abundant material for one of the finest, as it is undoubtedly one of the wittiest, novels that have been written in Serbian.

Christmas Eve

Another festival, which the Serbians, like other nations, conduct with many rites and customs of unmistakably pagan origin and which fills the hearts of all with joy, is Christmas. It is a saying of the Serbian people that "there is no day without light—neither is there any real joy without Christmas."

The Serbian peasant is, as a general rule,

an early riser, but on Christmas Eve (*Badgni Dan*) everybody is up earlier than usual, for it is a day when each member of the household has his hands full of work to be done. Two or more of the young men are sent out from every house to the nearest forest [1] to cut, and bring home, a young oak tree, which is called *Badgnak*. (The etymology of this word is obscure, but it is probably the name, or derived from the name, of a pagan god.) When the young man who is to cut the tree has selected it, he kneels down, and murmuring words of greeting and uttering a special prayer, he throws at it a handful of wheat or corn; then he makes the sign of the Cross three times and begins carefully to cut in such a direction that the tree must necessarily fall toward the East, and at just about the moment when the sun first appears above the horizon. He has also to see that the tree does not touch, in falling to earth, the branches of any tree near it, otherwise the prosperity of his house would most surely be

[1] Forests have been considered until recently as the common property of all. Even in our day every peasant is at liberty to cut a Badgnak-tree in any forest he chooses, though it may be the property of strangers.

disturbed during the ensuing year. The trunk of the tree is now cut into three logs, one of which is rather longer than the others.

Toward evening, when everything is ready and all the members of the family are assembled in the kitchen, the chief room in the dwelling, a large fire is lit, and the head of the family solemnly carries in the Badgnak, and, placing it on the fire, so that the thicker end is left about twelve inches beyond the hearth, he pronounces in a loud voice his good wishes for the prosperity of the house and all within it. In the same way he brings in the other parts of the Badgnak, and, when all are in a blaze, the young shepherds embrace across the largest log, for they believe that by doing so they will ensure the attachment of the sheep to their lambs, of the cows to their calves, and of all other animals to their young.

At this point of the proceedings the oldest member of the family brings in a bundle of straw and hands it over to the housewife, to whom he wishes at the same time "a good evening and a happy Badgni Dan." She then throws a handful of corn at him, thanks him for the straw and starts walking about the kitchen and the adjoining rooms, scatter-

ing straw on the floor and imitating the clucking of hens, while the children gleefully follow her and imitate the sounds made by young chicks.

This finished, the mother has next to bring a yellow wax candle and an earthen vessel filled with burning coal. The father again reverently makes the sign of the Cross, lights the candle and places some incense on the embers. Meanwhile the rest of the family have already formed themselves into a semicircle, with the men standing on the right and the women on the left. The father now proceeds to say prayers aloud, walking from one end of the semicircle to the other and stopping in front of each person for a short space of time that the fumes of smoking incense, in the censer, held in his right hand, should rise to the face of every one in turn. The prayers which they utter on these occasions last for about fifteen or twenty minutes, and vary in nearly every district.

After the prayers they all sit down to supper, which is laid, not upon a table, but on the floor, for it is considered a good orthodox custom to lay sacks over the stone or clay of which the floor is formed, and to use

cushions instead of chairs on Christmas Eve. During supper, at which no meat is served, the father of the family enthusiastically toasts the Badgnak, expressing at the same time his wishes for their common prosperity for the New Year, and pours a glass of wine over the protruding end of the log. In many parts of Serbia all the peasants—men, women, and even small children—fast for the forty-five days immediately before Christmas. They abstain from meat, eggs, and milk-food, and eat simply vegetables and fruit.

When the supper is over the whole family retires to bed, except one of the young men, who remains near the fire to see that the Badgnak does not burn off completely, and that the fire is not extinguished.

Christmas Day

It is generally believed that the rites and customs concerning this Church festival, which we Serbians call in our own language *Boyitch*, meaning 'the little God,' is nothing but the modified worship of the pagan god Dabog (or Daybog), to whom we have already referred, or perhaps represents several forms of that worship. Our pagan ancestors used

to sacrifice a pig to their Sun-god, and in our day there is not a single house throughout Serbia in which 'roast pork' is not served on Christmas Day as a matter of course. The men and boys of each household rise very early in the morning that day to make a big fire in the courtyard, and to roast a sucking-pig on a spit, for which all preparations are made on Badgni Dan. The moment each little pig is placed at the fire there is a vigorous firing of pistols or rifles to greet it, showing by the sound of shot after shot that the whole village is astir. As nearly all the houses in a village zealously practise the same custom, and as naturally every youth considers it a part of his duty to fire a pistol, the neighbouring hills echo again and again as if persistent skirmishing were going on.

Still early in the morning one of the maidens goes to the public well to fetch some drinking water, and when she reaches the well she greets it, wishing it a happy Christmas, throwing at the same time into it a handful of corn and a bunch, or perhaps merely a sprig, of basil. She throws the corn in the hope that the crops may be as abundant as water, and the basil is to keep the water always

limpid and pure. The first cupful of the water she draws is used to make a cake (*thesnitsa*) to be broken at the midday meal into as many pieces as there are members of the household. A silver coin has been put into the dough, and the person who finds it in his piece of cake is considered as the favourite of Fortune for the year to come.

During the morning every house expects a visitor (*polaznik*), who is usually a young boy from a neighbouring house. When the polaznik enters the house he breaks off a small branch of the Badgnak's smouldering end, and while he is greeting the head of the house with "Christ is born!" and all the others are answering him with a cry of "In truth He is born!" the mother throws at him a handful of wheat. He then approaches the hearth, and strikes the Badgnak with his own piece of tree repeatedly, so that thousands of sparks fly up into the chimney, and he pronounces his good wishes: "May the holy Christmas bring to this house as many sheep, as many horses, as many cows, as many beehives, [and so forth], as there are sparks in this fire!" Then he places on the Badgnak either a silver or a gold coin, which the head

of the family keeps to give to the blacksmith to smelt in with the steel when making his new plough—for, as he believes, this cannot fail to make the ground more fertile and all go well. The polaznik is, of course, made to stay and share the meal with them, and afterwards he is presented with a special cake also containing a coin, sometimes a gold one, sometimes silver.

After the repast all the youths go out of doors for sports, especially for sleighing, while the older people gather together round a *guslar* (a national bard), and take much, even endless, delight in listening to his recitals of their ancient ballads.

The Dodola Rite

The disasters which Serbian peasants most fear are of two kinds—drought and very violent storms. In pagan times there was a goddess who, it is believed, ruled the waters and the rain. When the Serbians were first converted to Christianity, the power of controlling the ocean, rivers, and storms, and the sailing of ships at sea was attributed to St Nicholas, and the Dalmatians, sea-going men, still pray only to him ; whereas in the heart

of Serbia, where the peasants have no conception of what large navigable rivers are, still less of what seas and lakes are like, supplication is made to the favourite goddess *Doda* or *Dodola* whenever there is an unduly long spell of dry weather.

The Dodola rite is a peculiar one. A maiden, generally a Gipsy, is divested of her usual garments and then thickly wrapped round with grass and flowers so that she is almost concealed beneath them. She wears a wide wreath of willow branches interwoven with wild flowers around her waist and hips, and in such fantastic attire she has to go from house to house in the village dancing, while each housewife pours over her a pailful of water, and her companions chant a prayer having the refrain, *Oy Dodo, oy Dodole* after every single line :

> Fall, O rain ! and gentlest dew !
> Oy, Dodo ! Oy, Dodole !
> Refresh our pasture-lands and fields !
> Oy, Dodo ! Oy, Dodole !

In each verse that follows mention is made of a cereal or other plant, imploring Doda that rain may soon be shed upon it. Then the cottage women give them presents, either

food or money, and the maidens sing other songs for them, always in the same rhythm, give their thanks, offer good wishes, and are gone.

Whitsuntide

During the Whitsuntide festivities, about fifteen young girls, mostly Christian Gipsies, one of whom personates the Standard-bearer, another the King, and another the Queen (*kralyitza*), veiled and attended by a number of Maids of Honour, proceed from door to door through the village, singing and dancing. Their songs relate to such subjects as marriage, the choice of a husband or wife, the happiness of wedded life, the blessing of having children. After each verse of their songs follows a refrain, *Lado, oy, Lado-leh!* which is probably the name of the ancient Slavonic Deity of Love.

Palm Sunday

In winter, just before Lent, the great festival in honour of the Dead is celebrated, at which every one solemnizes the memory of departed relations and friends, and no sooner does Palm Sunday arrive than the

people join in commemorating the renovation of life.

On the preceding Saturday the maidens assemble on a hill, and recite poems on the resurrection of Lazarus; and on Sunday, before sunrise, they meet at the place where they draw water and dance their country dance (*kollo*), chanting a song, which relates how the water becomes dull by the antlers of a stag, and bright by his eye.

St George's Day

On St George's Day, April 23rd (*Dyourdyev Dan*), long before dawn, all the members of a Serbian family rise and bathe in water in which a number of herbs and flowers—each possessing its own peculiar signification—have been cast before sunset the preceding day. He who fails to get up in good time, and whom the sun surprises in bed, is said to have fallen in disgrace with St George, and he will consequently have little or no luck in any of his undertakings for the next twelve months. This rite is taken as a sign that the Serbian peasants yield to the many influences of newly awakened nature.

It will be seen by any one who studies the

matter that each season in turn prompts the Serbians, as it must prompt any simple primitive people, to observe rites pointing to the mysterious relation in which man finds that he stands to nature.

Serbian National Epic Poetry

That the Serbian people—as a distinct Slav and Christian nationality—did not succumb altogether to the Ottoman oppressor, that through nearly five centuries of subjection to the Turk the Southern Slavs retained a deep consciousness of their national ideals, is due in a very large measure to the Serbian national poetry, which kept alive in the hearts of the Jugoslavs deep hatred of the Turk, and gave birth, among the oppressed Slavs, to the sentiment of a common misfortune. The national ballads made possible that collective effort which culminated in the defeat of the Turk on the battlefields of Koumanovo, Monastir, Prilip, Prizrend, Kirk-Kilisse, Scutari, the Jadar, the Tzer, Mladenovats and Belgrade.

Who wrote those poems? We might as well ask, who is the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey?* If *Homer* be the collective

pseudonym of an entire cycle of Hellenic national bards, then 'The Serbian people' is that of the national bards who chanted those Serbian epic poems during the centuries, and to whom it mattered little that their names should be attached to them. The task which was performed with such ability in ancient Greece by the learned Diascevastes of the time of Pisistratus, that task was accomplished in Serbia by a self-taught peasant, the famous Vuk Stephanovitch Karadgitch, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1]

[1] Vuk Karadgitch was born in 1787, and was illiterate until his eighteenth year, when on the outbreak of the insurrection he passed into Sirmia and attended an elementary school. At the age of twenty he became a student of the first Belgrade High School mentioned on p. 83; in 1813, intercourse with the philologist Jernei Kopitar inspired him with the ambition to give a literary form to the popular Serbian language. From 1814 until his death in 1864 he devoted himself to a work of reform which was one long and bitter struggle against ignorance and prejudice, and was only in the last years of his life crowned with full success. He composed grammars and dictionaries of the Serbian language, and wrote many critical essays and commentaries which established a solid basis for the reform of the language. Even more important was his spelling reform, which, based on a strict phonetic basis of thirty letters for the thirty sounds which exist in the language, made Serbian the most logically and easily written idiom in Europe, unequalled

Vuk's first collection of Serbian national poems, which he wrote down as he heard them from the lips of the *guslari* (*i.e.* Serbian national bards), was published for the first time at Vienna in 1814, and was not only eagerly read throughout Serbia and in the literary circles of Austria and Germany, but also in other parts of Europe.

Those poems dwell upon the glory of the Serbian mediæval empire, lost on the fatal field of Kossovo. When the Turks conquered the Serbian lands and drove away the flower of the Serbian aristocracy, these men took refuge in the monasteries and villages, where the Turkish horsemen never came. There they remained through centuries undisturbed, inspired by the eloquence of the Serbian monks, who considered it their sacred duty to preserve for the nation behind their old walls the memory of ancient kings and tsars and of the glorious past in which they flourished.

even by Italian in this respect. Vuk's literary work includes critical and historical writing, but will be remembered chiefly for his important collections of songs, stories, sayings, proverbs, and popular charades, and of national poetry. The popularization of these collections has given a common literary language to the mass of the Serbian people.

Professional bards went from one village to another, chanting in an easy decasyllabic verse the exploits of Serbian heroes and *Haiduks* (knight-brigands), who were the only check upon the Turkish atrocities. The bards carried news of political and other interesting events, often correct, sometimes more or less distorted, and the gifted Serbians—for gifted they were and still are—did not find it difficult to remember, and to repeat to others, the stories thus brought to them in poetic form. As the rhythm of the poems is easy, and as the national ballads have become interwoven with the spirit of every true Serbian, it is not rare that a peasant who has heard a poem but once can not only repeat it as he heard it, but also improvise passages; nay, he can at times even compose entire original ballads on the spur of a moment of inspiration.

In Serbian Hungary there are schools in which the blind learn these national ballads, and go from one fair to another to recite them before the peasants who come from all Serbian lands. But this is not the true method. In the mountains of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Herzegovina there is no occasion to learn them mechanically: they are familiar to

all from infancy. When, in the winter evening, the members of a Serbian family assemble round the fire, and the women are engaged with their spinning, poems are recited by those who happen to know them best.

The Gusle

The ballads are recited invariably to the accompaniment of a primitive instrument with a single string, called a *gusle,* which is to be found in almost every house. The popular Serbian poet, Peter Petrovitch, in his masterpiece, *Gorsky Viyenatz* ('The Mountain Wreath') uttered the following lines, which have become proverbial :

> Dye se gusle u kutyi ne tchuyu
> Tu su mrtva i kutya i lyoudi.
>
> (The house in which the gusle is not heard
> Is dead, as well as the people in it.)

The old men with grown-up sons, who are excused from hard labour, recite to their grandchildren, who yield themselves with delight to the rhythmic verse through which they receive their first knowledge of the past. Even the abbots of the monasteries do not deem it derogatory to recite those ballads to

the monotonous accompaniment of the gusle. But the performance has more of the character of a recitation than of singing: the string is struck only at the end of each verse.

There is hardly a tavern or inn in any Serbian village where one could see an assembly of peasants without a guslar around whom all are gathered, listening with delight to his ballads. At the festivals near the cloisters, where the peasants meet together in great numbers, professional guslars recite the heroic songs and emphasize the pathetic passages in such an expressive manner that there is hardly a listener whose cheeks are not bedewed with copious tears. The music is extremely simple, but its simplicity is a powerful and majestic contrast to the exuberance of romance manifested in the exploits and deeds of some favourite hero—as, for example, the Royal Prince Marko.

There are many bold hyperboles in those national songs, and little wonder if they are discredited by Western critics, especially in the ballads concerning the exploits of the beloved Marko—who "throws his heavy mace

aloft as high as the clouds and catches it again in his right hand, without dismounting from his trusty courser Sharatz." Now and then an English reader would find passages which would seem somewhat coarse, but he must bear in mind that the ballads have usually been composed and transmitted from generation to generation by simple and illiterate peasants. Most of those concerning the Royal Prince Marko date from the early fourteenth century, when life and customs were different from those prevailing now.

It is worthy of consideration that the history of the Serbian and other Southern-Slavonic nations, developed in a poetical form, has thus been converted into a national property, and is preserved in the memory of the entire people so vividly that a Western traveller must be surprised when he hears even the most ignorant Serbian peasant relate to him something at least of the old kings and tsars of the glorious dynasty of Nemanyitch, and of the feats and deeds of national heroes of all epochs.

MAP OF
SERBIA
Scale of English Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
Railways
Frontiers to-day
prior to 1913
Drawn by G.W. Bacon & Co. Ltd. 127 Strand London.
ADRIATIC
SEA
ALBANIA
MACEDONIA
GREECE
RUMANIA
Telenikal
Catinje
Jakova
PRISREN
Ferizovich
KACHANIC PASS
Gilane
Vranja
Kustandil
RILA PL.
RHODOPE PL.
PERIM DAGH
L. Skutari
SKUTARI
Antivari
Drin
Kalkandele
USKUB (SKOPLYE)
Koumanovo
Gjuevo
Alessio
Durazzo
Tirana
Elbasan
Shkumbi
Ochrida
L. Ochrida
Prilip
Kuprulu
Istib
Radovishta
Krivolak
Negotin
Strumnitsa
Demir Hissar
Doiran
SERRES
Nigrita
MONASTIR
L. Prespa
L. Ostrovo
Vodena
Vardar
Koritsa
Berat
Devol
Osum
Kesrie
Karaferia
SALONICA
Gulf of Salonica
Long. East of Greenwich
20
22
42

20
22
44
Vranika
VERSECZ
Stevenak
Arilal
Tirgu Jiului
Jiu
Brcka
Save
Sava
H U N G A R K A
Semlin
Pancsova
BELGRADE
Bazias
Kradishte
Orsova
New Orsova
Turnu Severinu
Danube
Leshnitsa
Losnitsa
Jadar
Rakamelj
Tser
Obrenovats
Ralya
Semendria
Posnarevats
Filias
RUMANIA
Tuzla
Zvornik
Stupari
Krupanj
Lazarevats
Arangelovats
Topola
Mladenovats
Palanka
Maydan Pek
Radujevac
Negotin
Desnatzu
B O S N I A
Valyevo
Gornjaca
Klissura
Cevljanovic
Kusace
SERAJEVO
Vishegrad
Uzhitse
Kragujevats
Chatchak
Chupriya
Senjski majdan
Zajecar
Vidin
Danube
Lom Palanka
Prlita
Timok
Sarbian Morava
St. Peter
Krushevats
Kojazevac
Nova Varos
Plevlie
Tepca
Rzav
Lim
Novi Bazar
JASTREBAC PL.
NISH
Nishava
Sv. Nikola
Pirot
Berkovica
Vraca
PLANINA
Leskovats
KOPLANIK PL.
Morava